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Post-Election Israel: Rabbis Run Amok

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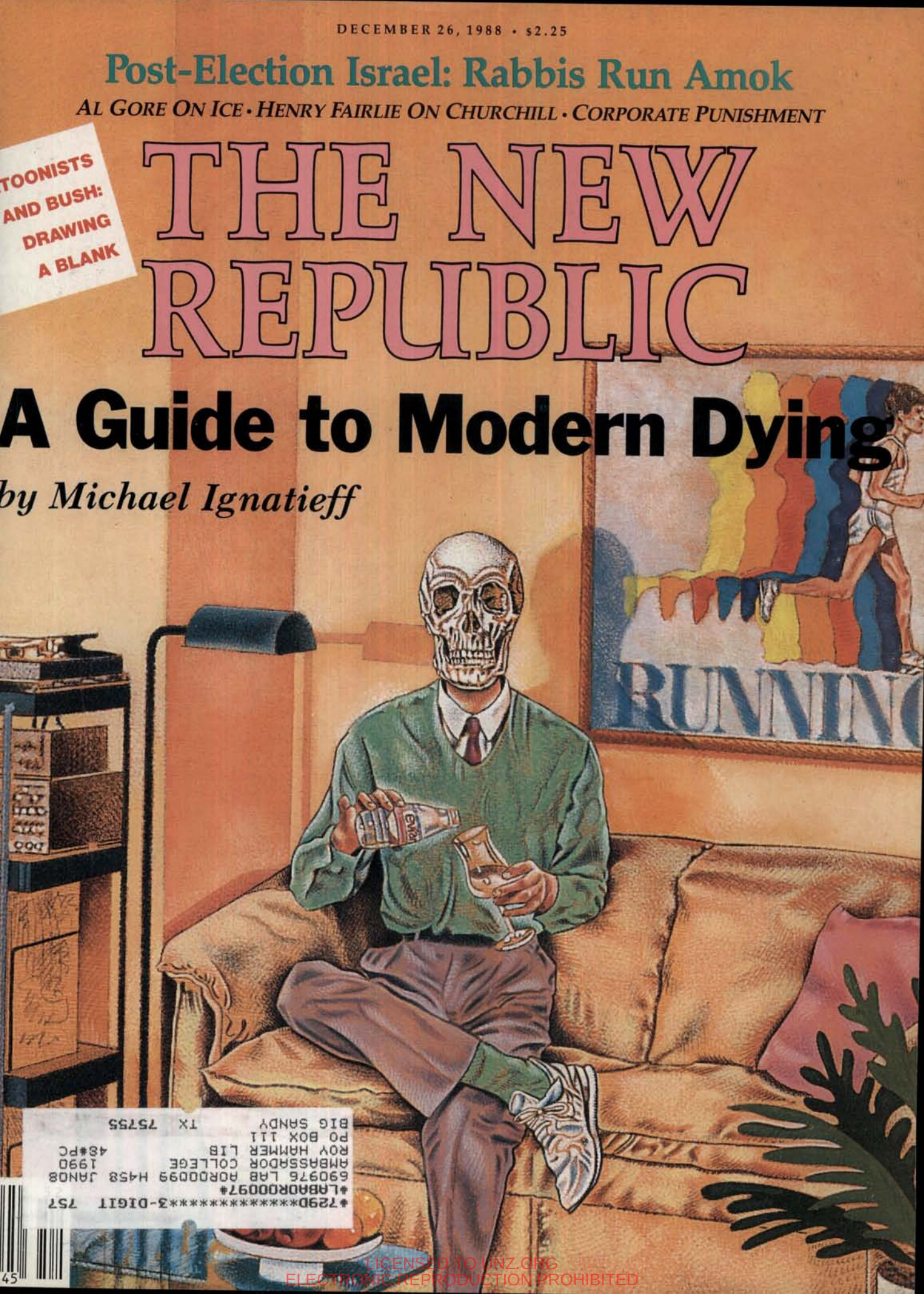
THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Guide to Modern Dying

by Michael Ignatieff



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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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FROM WASHINGTON

POETIC INJUSTICE

Editor's note: this column was written by Leon Wieseltier.

A document of Israel, 1988:

A day of light for Israel /
A day of doom for Ishmael

A day of blessing for Israel /
A day of disorder for Ishmael

A day of redemption for Israel /
A day of exile for Ishmael

A day of exultation for Israel /
A day of decline for Ishmael

A day of grandeur for Israel /
A day of ruin for Ishmael

A day of steadfastness for Israel /
A day of woe for Ishmael

A day of vindication for Israel /
A day of scorn for Ishmael

A day of mercy for Israel /
A day of destruction for Ishmael

A day of purity for Israel /
A day of pollution for Ishmael

A day of salvation for Israel /
A day of wailing for Ishmael

A day of prosperity for Israel /
A day of extinction for Ishmael

A day of learning for Israel /
A day of filth for Ishmael

A day of dominion for Israel /
A day of plague for Ishmael

A day of solace for Israel /
A day of vengeance for Ishmael

A day of forgiveness for Israel /
A day of stoning for Ishmael

A day of succor for Israel /
A day of rage for Ishmael

A day of rescue for Israel /
A day of fear for Ishmael

A day of rejoicing for Israel /
A day of squealing for Ishmael

A day of holiness for Israel /
A day of damnation for Ishmael

A day of favor for Israel /
A day of evil for Ishmael

A day of peace for Israel /
A day of holocaust for Ishmael

A day of deliverance for Israel /
A day of defeat for Ishmael

This liturgical poem, an alphabetical acrostic in Hebrew, appears in a booklet of "hymns and songs, Sabbath songs and selected supplications and cherished refrains" distributed by Shas, or the Sephardi Guardians of the Torah, the party that Likud and Labor are courting for the six seats it won in the new Knesset. The translation of the penultimate lines was especially easy: *shalom* is wished for Israel and *shoah* is wished for Ishmael. In a brief preface, Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef, the former Sephardi chief rabbi of Israel, blesses the reader with longevity and prosperity, and suggests that the reader will profit from a vote for the party.

This document is remarkable for combining in a single text the two features of Israeli culture that were recently rewarded with a new measure of political power: racism and the spoliation of religion. The fact that Zionism is not racism has not prevented some Zionists from becoming racists. It has certainly not prevented some non-Zionists from becoming racists. This week is the birthday of the *intifada*; and the warm reception in Israel of the Israeli army's brutality in the territories is owed to reasons more subliminal than a difference of opinion about the requirements of strategic depth in modern tank warfare.

The most popular Orwellianism for Israeli racism is "transfer," or, in plain language, expulsion. Two parties won a representation in Knesset with explicit calls for the banishment of Arabs from all the territory west of the Jordan river; and in two other, larger parties, the idea is a legitimate part of "the policy debate." Congratulations to Israel for keeping Meir Kahane out of the elections; but in Israel these days Meir Kahane is a little de trop.

Now comes the Shas poet to teach that there is worse than "transfer." At least "transfer" is not *shoah*; or, to speak strictly, it is the *Umschlagplatz* and no more. An Israeli friend of mine, a Jew who grew up in Poland after the war and left as a result of Gomulka's Jew-baiting, says that in "transfer" he hears "transport." The Shas poet, and at least the 197,372 people who voted for Shas and the two transfer parties, would say, good; and then proceed to their Monday and Thursday lamentations that "we were like sheep to the slaughter" or to their Holocaust commemorations. These 197,372 people (there are many more, of course) do not see that they have forfeited their past, with their fantasy of repeating it in the other role.

It is dawning upon many Jews that religion is ruining politics. I suggest that they worry also that politics is ruining religion. Was Judaism ever proudly desecrated by rabbis before? But these rabbis, in Bnei Brak and in Brooklyn, are dragging the Torah, the Written Law and the Oral Law, through the mud. They are profaning it with their will to power. They are the heirs of one of the most rich and sophisticated traditions of thought and behavior in the history of the world; and they are coarsening it, vulgarizing it, making it seem cynical, mean, and stupid.

These rabbis sell indulgences ("I heed the call of the Lubavitcher rebbe to vote for List 3 for the sake of national unity," read one leaflet, "and I ask for his holy blessing for health, a long life, contentment, family happiness, and success in all that I do," after which you fill in your name, address, and phone number, so that the pontiff may find you). They praise creationism ("A single Sephardic woman kissing the Torah," says Rabbi Yitzhak Peretz of Shas, "is worth more than 40 professors teaching that man is descended from a monkey"). They teach that traffic deaths are a punishment for not observing the Sabbath. (Peretz, again.) *These* are the people before whom Yitzhak Shamir and Shimon Peres are bowing and scraping.

Where are the many rabbis, the many Orthodox rabbis, who know better? For, as religious Jews know, this is not Jewish religion, but the superstition of Jews disguised as Jewish religion. The Jewish tradition will survive these buffoons and these boors. But it will be a long time before religion offers us relief from politics. I am reminded of Richard Howard's lines:

> if I tell you this place is holier
> than others, I only mean
> more holiness has run out of it. □

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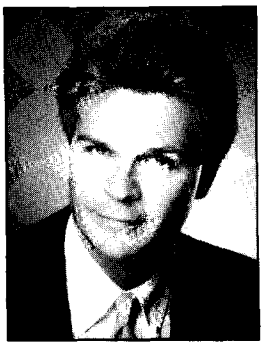

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CORRESPONDENCE

WHEN PUNDITS SPEAK

To the editors:

I am writing to thank you for the excellent interview of George Bush by J. William Medley ("The Medley Interview: 'Truth Is the Test,'" November 28). To be honest, I had never heard of Medley before. Nevertheless, I found his probing, in-depth interview to be in refreshing contrast to the superficial TV sound bites as well as the empty words and stock phrases of present-day political analysts and columnists. Medley clearly has an extraordinary talent for extracting and elucidating the innermost thoughts and instincts of the political leaders of our times. By the end of his interview I had an unusually clear understanding not only of the critical issues facing our great nation but also of the innermost workings of the mind of the man who will shortly assume the burden of the presidency. It is this sort of intelligent, perspicacious analysis that is so sorely lacking in the political media. I sincerely hope that Medley will continue to contribute his analysis of the political events and personalities of our times as we face the challenges of a stormy, uncertain future.

"SMEDLEY FERNLAP"
Seattle, Washington

COMMON THIEME

To the editors:

Elinor J. Brecher and Robert T. Garrett almost scared the pants offa me with their revelation that some members of the Quayle family like to listen to the tapes of Robert B. Thieme Jr., "an ultraconservative preacher" ("Marilyn's Thieme," November 14). They report, ominously, that Thieme fulminates against labor, government leaders, feminists, liberals, permissive parents, gays, internationalism—and even has called his own congregation "hypocrites, rat-finks, jerks, and self-righteous snobs." Freedom of speech is one thing, but this stuff is sheer heresy, and First Amendment protection should be withdrawn from anyone with such ideas. It's a pity, but Brecher and Garrett finally admit that "there's not enough here to start an election-altering scandal." But they haven't given up all hope. As they say, "the deeper you look, the weirder things get."

HARRY W. HENDERSON
Bethesda, Maryland

CLASSICAL COMPOSITION

To the editors:

Edward Rothstein ("Karajan, The Nazi Recordings," November 7) treats what I propose ought to be the focus in looking back to the fascist phenomena: to learn the appropriate lessons for the present and future. Herbert von Karajan's Nazi past is expressed today in the way he misconducts: holding a stopwatch in his left hand as he rehearses, his exaggerated pitches, and so on. All of the important intellectual work of my adolescence and adulthood, has been premised upon elaborating an intelligible proof of the fallacy of the Kantian Paradox. On that account, my formal representation of those creative processes associated with scientific discovery, and with classical musical composition, became the center of my work, to the following, included effect.

A linear representation of classical composition, as might be attempted by aid of a digital EDP system, is impossible in principle. Karajan shows himself insensible of this fact, to the effect that he takes license to superimpose what Rothstein rightly identifies as Nietzschean emotional license upon his mechanistic reading of the literal score.

If we map what classical composers, through Brahms, actually do, we are presented with a picture of the same sort of multiply connected geometry required to describe the creative processes' generation of a fundamental discovery in physics. Thus, essential in classical composition is the infusing of the harmonic ordering of natural beauty with those creative powers that set every person implicitly apart from and above the beasts, and enables the classical fine arts to address the highest moral qualities within the performers and audiences. When a classical composition is treated as a combination of mechanistic literalness with the arbitrary eroticism of existentialist aesthetics, the representation of both natural beauty and creativity is suppressed to the effect of what must be named a bestialization of the performance. That is the essence of "musical Nazism."

Thus, all great classical fine art is characterized by an act of "sacred love" toward the essential humanity within the individual, a celebration thus of the sacredness of the life of every person. The rejection of that is the evil essence of Hitler's Nazism, and of the organic philosophical-musical outlook of a Karajan then and now.

LYNDON H. LAROUCHE JR.
Leesburg, Virginia

HYMN AND HER

To the editors:

The Washington Diarist's criticism of the use of "friends" for "men" in such hymns as "Christian Men, Rejoice!" is good theology—reformers must be sensitive to the new meanings they engender. Her conclusion that sexist language in the hymnal is harmless, however, is not ("Christian Whales, Rejoice!" November 21). Sex-inclusive language is a vital concern for which many mainline denominations are leading the way. Perhaps the Diarist should stand and address a roomful of women as "mankind," or sing with them a few sex-exclusive hymns ("Rise Up, O Men of God" comes to mind) and see if she does not feel stupid in the end. The scandal is not the change we are trying to bring, the scandal is claiming that sexist language is too holy (or even worse, too comfortable) to be touched.

REV. JEFFREY DEYOE
Hallock, Minnesota

THE 25 PERCENT MANDATE

To the editors:

As TRB points out ("Too Close to Call," November 28), George Bush made a lot of political hay during this election proclaiming himself the candidate of the mainstream and painting Michael Dukakis as being out of touch with America. If by mainstream Bush means the majority, then the election results hold some troubling lessons for him and his bogus claim. Bush captured 54 percent of the votes and Dukakis 46 percent. However, only 51 percent of the eligible voters in this country bothered to cast their ballots. This means that "mainstream" America voted for neither candidate, and Bush barely beat Dukakis by garnering roughly one-fourth of the potential voters in the United States. Voter discontent won this election by a landslide.

DAVID M. SHERMAN
Newton, Massachusetts

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
DECEMBER 26, 1988

SCROOGED

It is always premature to celebrate the death of protectionism. Last spring, when Representative Dick Gephardt's presidential candidacy faltered and Michael Dukakis's gained momentum, we thought we had heard the last of election-year economic nationalism. But then Dukakis (not a protectionist at heart) picked up some of Gephardt's rhetoric in a last-gasp effort to close the gap between him and George Bush. For that reason, some free-trade enthusiasts may feel relieved by Bush's victory. But they would be foolish to relax. For, though Bush, like Ronald Reagan, can talk convincingly about his disdain for trade barriers, the Republican record provides cause for concern. Even as Reagan has commendably held the line against outright tariffs, non-tariff forms of protectionism have grown. When you count the "voluntary" export restraints that we forcefully extract from Japan (which are not only inefficient but ineffective) and miscellaneous other such wolves in sheep's clothing, the portion of American manufactured goods that are protected from foreign competition has risen from one-fifth to one-third (measured by value) since 1981.

There is no reason to think that Bush won't continue this insidious form of protection. And even if he doesn't, the issue of protectionism will be cropping up in Democratic circles as the party embarks on its quadrennial soul-searching. So the time is ripe to remind everyone what a bad thing it is to impede free trade. For the sake of regular readers, who by now may be wearying of our textbook argument to this effect, we've come up with a revised version. Not only does protectionism lead to: (*a*) inflation; (*b*) a lower standard of living, both at home and abroad; (*c*) a sclerotic labor force, insulated from the changing demands of world markets; (*d*) retaliation, and possibly a trade war that could wreck the global economy. Protectionism also (*a*) cheats less fortunate nations, especially in the Third World, out of their fair share of the economic pie; and thereby (*b*) raises our own foreign aid bill and (*c*) gives aid and comfort to the bad guys in the ongoing war between the capitalist and communist economic models.

When old-school Democrats are grasping for rationales for protectionism, they sometimes talk about the toll that untrammeled trade seems to take on workers in developing nations. So long as Americans buy dirt-cheap imported goods, the argument goes, they're just aiding the exploitation of low-paid workers in Korea and Taiwan. There may be a sense in which that's true, but what's the alternative? If we slap a tariff (or the equivalent) on the goods, then those workers, instead of being exploited, will be unemployed. That's the unavoidable truth: when we tax imported goods, or make them less plentiful in some more roundabout way, we are depriving Third World countries, and thus Third World workers, of income. It's easy for Americans to pontificate about the evils of low-wage sweatshops, but the choice between low wage and no wage is ultimately for the workers to make.

Among the reasons it is immoral to presume otherwise is that low-wage industries lead to high-wage industries. Look at our own history. Had Americans not secured a niche in the global economy during the Industrial Revolution by working 14-hour days under abysmal conditions, the nation might never have amassed the capital—both financial and intellectual—to achieve its present economic eminence. The minimum wage, the Occupational Safety

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and Health Act, and bountiful pensions are great things, but they didn't fall from heaven; we had to earn them—or, rather, our ancestors did. Similarly, had the Japanese not been willing to serve as the world's leading producer of cheap, tacky items (remember when "Made in Japan" wasn't something to brag about?), they would not enjoy their current dominance in prestige, high-tech industries.

All of this would amount to an argument from sheer altruism (and perhaps an adequate one, at that) were it not for the constant contest between capitalism and communism for the hearts and minds of the Third World. We spend a lot of money fighting this war—on development projects, such as the Caribbean Basin Initiative, and on other forms of aid intended partly to encourage allegiance to capitalism and democracy. What is the point of trying to help incipient capitalism with one hand if, with the other, we're hurting it? Why subsidize free enterprise in the Caribbean, or the Philippines, when our sugar quotas simultaneously make it harder to farm profitably in those areas? If we would get out of the way, and let developing nations freely take the first step toward capitalism, maybe we wouldn't have to subsidize the trip so heavily.

In political terms, protectionism remains a tough issue for Democrats; farmers and labor unions are still an important part of the party's constituency, and they continue to push hard for their short-term self-interest, even if at the expense of their long-term self-interest (not to mention everyone else's). But in ideological terms, there can be no doubt about where the party belongs on this issue. Protectionism, in addition to being all the things we know it to be (i.e., bad for just about everyone on both sides of the trade barrier), has a peculiarly pernicious effect on developing nations. And the welfare of developing nations, it is worth repeating from time to time, has traditionally weighed more heavily on the minds of Democrats than of Republicans.

NOTEBOOK

□ THE HILL AND KNOWLTON OF THE WEST: A time-honored method of improving your shot at a political appointment is to amplify any rumors that you're in the running. But how to feed the Washington rumor mill if you live outside the Beltway, in an academic community far removed from lunches with Evans and Novak? Ask the Stanford University public relations office. In late November it issued a press release disclosing that economics professor Michael Boskin had labeled reports of his selection as chairman of the Bush administration's Council of Economic Advisers "premature." Shucks, Boskin said, "It's flattering to have my name mentioned, but Vice President Bush has many outstanding men and women . . . who would make fine appointees." But not as fine as Boskin. He is a "mainstream conservative," the press release said, with a long history of government service, and he was described by a mentor as "my best graduate student during my whole 40-year career." Boskin also has the sine qua non for service in a Bush administration—proficiency in racquet sports: "An avid tennis player, his former students [sic] have included such world-ranked players as Tim Mayotte, Scott Davis, Kathy Jordan," etc. An avid brown-noser, Boskin was quoted as praising Bush's "sense of humor and sense of self. He can poke fun at himself." And "He is always asking perceptive questions about the economy. When I make a statement, he always wants to know what the evidence is to support it or about another facet of it that I have not emphasized." Above all, Bush "is an enjoyable person to be around, he is very giving and he is an easy person to work with." Boskin got the job.

□ WIN SOME, LOSE SOME:

Navistar cleared of charges over Wisconsin Steel

—*Chicago Tribune*, November 17

Navistar ruled liable in Wis. Steel case

—*Chicago Sun-Times*, same day

□ DOUBLE TALK: Has anybody noticed that the states most hysterical about George Shultz's refusal of entry to Yasir Arafat so that he might address the General Assembly are the very states that have over the years voted to exclude Israel from that body? At the beginning of this year's session, 41 governments—including the Soviet Union, Jordan, Cuba, Nicaragua, etc.—cast their ballots to consider the expulsion of the Israeli delegation. This is proof, if any was needed, that a good number of Mr. Shultz's foreign critics don't really believe in the U.N. equivalent of the First Amendment, which they invented for the occasion of the Arafat flap. As with their invocation of international law in this instance, the principles they hardly ever honor themselves are the very ones they use to taunt the United States. Assisting them in this endeavor is the Western media chorus, which refuses to concede that Communist and Third World diplomacy is usually, as Clausewitz might have put it, just war by other means.

□ WHICH WAY TO THE BEACH?

Lilco Will Try to Open Shoreham

—*New York Times*, December 3

Utility May Sell, Close Shoreham

—*Washington Post*, same day

□ DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS: TNR owes two apologies. The first is to Brian Hall, the gifted author of *Stealing from a Deep Place*. Through the miracle of fact-checking (with considerable help from Books in Print), Hall became Hau in the Diarist of December 19. Our second apology goes to the memory of Sean MacBride, who deserves more credit than we gave him for his activities on behalf of the IRA (Notebook, December 19). MacBride first joined the Irish Volunteers, forerunners of the IRA, at the age of 12. Ap-

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pointed chief of staff of the IRA underground army in 1928, he did not formally break with the IRA until 1937, and even then continued to defend IRA suspects and to oppose anti-terrorist legislation. All this and the Nobel Prize, too.

□ OPEN SEASON:

Shots meant for deer kill driver, hunter

—*Milwaukee Journal*, November 27

It was a very good year for safety of hunters

—same paper, same day

(thanks to R. Stern, Madison, Wisconsin)

El Salvador, to go.

DOMINO'S DELIVERY

IT WAS EASY to miss amid the U.S. presidential campaign, but October was an important month for the future of American policy in El Salvador. The top guerrilla commanders of the Communist FMLN, Joaquin Villalobos and Leonel Gomez, launched a diplomatic offensive through Latin America on October 20, asserting to Costa Rica's Oscar Arias and Peru's Alan Garcia that they were seeking a negotiated end to the civil war. Simultaneously, though, they stepped up that war, detonating two car bombs in San Salvador on October 19, killing three people, and reaffirming their policy of "bringing to justice" civilian mayors who support the government of José Napoleón Duarte. Seven mayors have been assassinated this year.

In the United States, too, there was activity on the Salvador front. CISPES (Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador), the FMLN's American support group, staged a Vietnam-style demonstration at the Pentagon on October 19, featuring Daniel Ellsberg and David Delliger, at which 215 people were arrested. CISPES affiliates also picketed the home state offices of Representative Stephen Solarz and Senator Bill Bradley because they support military aid to El Salvador.

That day the Council on Hemispheric Affairs, a left-wing think tank, issued a press release declaring that "the administration's counterinsurgency strategy in El Salvador is in grave crisis," that "the [Salvadoran] government is losing its battle to contain the leftist insurgents, and in frustration, is resorting to increased violence against the civilian population." COHA said (inaccurately) that "human rights abuses are occurring at a rate 100-fold that of 1987."

Also in October, Amnesty International issued a 49-page report titled "Death Squads—A Government Strategy," blaming stepped-up violence almost exclusively on government military and security forces and noting merely in one sentence that "opposition forces have also been accused of kidnappings and execution-style killings." And Representative George Miller of California charged in an October 21 *New York Times* op-ed piece that "the administration's policy of building democracy in El Salvador while defeating the leftist rebels militarily" was a "failure." He wrote, "We must redirect all our resources to a political settlement. . . . The alternative is many more years of instability, death-squad murders, and war."

What's going on here? Down in El Salvador, according to CISPES's official publication, *Alert!*, "The FMLN is pursuing a two-track approach, expanding its military operations in an effort to undercut the government's increasingly precarious position, while calling for negotiations to end the war." In the United States, opponents of the Reagan administration's Central American policy—having won a cutoff in funding for the Nicaraguan *contras*—have stepped up their campaign to reduce or cut off military aid to El Salvador (currently, $85 million a year) and to force the government into power-sharing negotiations with the FMLN.

According to Elliott Abrams, the State Department's outgoing Latin America policy chief, "For four years, there's been a bipartisan consensus, including liberal Democrats like Ted Kennedy and Jim Wright, to support Duarte. The question is whether that consensus will hold with Duarte's departure. The FMLN has clearly decided that it has an opportunity to destroy the consensus. They'll be working on Congress and the press to get across the view that our policy has failed, democracy is a fraud, and a settlement has to be imposed."

That analysis is not far from what FMLN leaders told Costa Rican leaders, according to administration officials. "We heard they told Arias, 'We're going to win this war in Washington just the way the Sandinistas did,' " one official said. As part of the campaign, leaders of the FMLN and its allied political front, the FDR, are assuring Latin officials and U.S. legislators that they want El Salvador to have a "pluralist," not Leninist, political system. That's what the Sandinistas told the world in 1979.

CISPES's executive director, Angela Sanbrano, noted, "We do not see congressional opinion at this point as being as fully developed as public opinion." She said in an interview that "there is a lot of public support for an end to the administration policy, which we hope to translate into massive opposition . . . through demonstrations, congressional visits, and pressure." She said that similar "public pressure" forced an end to *contra* aid and that "we're going to try" to repeat the process on El Salvador. Current plans, she said, call for demonstrations in 100 U.S. cities this March, when Salvador is to elect a successor to Duarte and when Congress will be considering the administration's foreign aid request.

Reagan administration critics are correct in saying that after eight years, the expenditure of more than $2 billion, and the loss of more than 60,000 lives, El Salvador is not yet a real democracy and the Communist insurgency is not yet defeated. According to Sam Dillon of the *Miami Herald*, in a comprehensive analysis in *Foreign Policy* magazine, municipal governments cannot operate in 55 of the

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country's 262 towns, and the guerrillas were able to destroy more electric power pylons in 1988 than the year before. Income per capita is 27 percent below what it was in 1978, and social indicators such as infant mortality, unemployment, availability of clean drinking water, and housing all have worsened. Some of this is the result of mismanagement; much is the result of war. Dillon estimates that the FMLN has caused damage over the past eight years approximately equal to the total of U.S. aid.

AS A RESULT of war-weariness, government corruption, economic failure, and divisions in Duarte's Christian Democratic party, the right-wing ARENA party won a stunning victory in legislative elections last March, and ARENA's presidential candidate, Frederico Cristiani, is currently favored to beat the Christian Democrat, Fidel Chavez Mena, in the March elections. Although Cristiani, an American-educated businessman, seems to be a genuine free market democrat, his party is still heavily influenced by its founder, Roberto d'Aubuisson, who is widely believed to be connected to death squads that massacred peasants and suspected dissidents by the thousands in the early 1980s.

Reagan administration officials clearly are rooting for a Chavez Mena victory, but the United States presumably will not (and, in the name of democracy, definitely should not) intervene, as it did massively in 1984, to prevent an ARENA victory. Moderates in Congress such as Solarz say that, if elected, Cristiani should be given a chance to show that he can govern fairly, although aid ought to be conditioned on improvements in the human rights situation.

This year there has been some deterioration on the human rights front—but hardly "100-fold" or even enough to declare that Reagan policy in El Salvador has been an abject failure. Tutela Legal, the Roman Catholic Church's human rights office, attributed 32 political murders to right-wing death squads in the first six months of 1988, compared with 24 in all of 1987; 48 to military and security forces, compared with 60 in 1987; and 19 to the FMLN, compared with 29 in 1987.

On October 25, in an unprecedented move, Tutela Legal's director, Maria Julia Hernandez, went on television to condemn the FMLN for murdering four peasants in the San Salvador suburb of Apopa and charged that the killers had identified themselves as soldiers of the Salvadoran First Infantry Brigade. State Department officials contend that other killings attributed to death squads and to the government actually are carried out by the Communists, although this rarely has been independently supported in the past.

Not all of the increase in political murder can be attributed to the FMLN, however. Even Cristiani confirmed, in a Washington interview on November 30, that there has been an increase in violence by the army and security police. "One reason," he said, "is that Duarte gave an amnesty to 480 guerrillas last September. The guerrillas number 4,000 to 5,000, so that's ten percent of their strength. If you are a soldier, you do not want to keep capturing these people if the government is going to let them loose." Cristiani said that his policy would be to improve the professionalism and discipline of the army, and to conduct "a bilateral dialogue with the FMLN to reach a cease-fire and incorporate them into the political process."

Cristiani said he would not, however, agree to the FMLN agenda of power-sharing. "The democracy is not negotiable," he said. "The FMLN is a small part of society. It seems big only because it causes violence." He also said that it would be disastrous for the United States to cut off military aid. "Just from survival instinct, the military would go back to the dirty war." Abrams said he thought such a move would lead to "a military coup—instantly."

The fact is that while Reagan administration policy has been far from a total success, it has achieved a great deal. There have been five free elections in El Salvador since 1982. In 1981 and 1982, the rate of civilian murders was running at 800 per month, not 280 per year. In eight years the number of FMLN fighters has been cut in half, the army top command has been convinced that it has to win support from the civilian population, not repress it, and top civilian allies of the FMLN, including Reuben Zamora and Guillermo Ungo, have returned to political life in San Salvador. Their party, the Democratic Convergence, is receiving less than ten percent support in public opinion polls, suggesting that Nicaragua-style socialism is not what the people of El Salvador want.

The Bush administration and Congress need to improve upon what's been done in El Salvador during the Reagan years, not give it up for lost. There needs to be more U.S. pressure for human rights improvement and military professionalism; more money for housing, education, and water projects; and encouragement of land reform based on privatized stock ownership by peasants, rather than collective ownership or small-plot farming. There ought to be negotiations between the elected government and the left, but not on terms dictated by the guerrillas or the U.S. Congress. Most of all, the United States needs to be patient and perseverant. For a formerly feudal place like El Salvador, democracy will be a long time arriving.

MORTON M. KONDRACKE

POSTCARD ANTARCTICA

UNBEARABLE WHITENESS

I'M TRYING TO remember what I thought about Antarctica before I came here. For the most part, I didn't think about it at all. It is just plain remote. From the other side of the world, in Christchurch, New Zealand, it is another eight hours due south by plane to the main U.S. base, McMurdo, and then another three hours from there to the South Pole.

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I came to the coldest place on Earth to hunt for information about global warming, but I was unprepared for the continent itself. For example, I didn't know that the land area is half again as large as the entire United States. Or that 90 percent of all the ice in the world is here—which means, among other things, that there is really no comparison between this place and the Arctic. Antarctica is larger, more isolated, more important in the global ecosystem—and much colder.

You don't expect a continent at the "bottom" of the world to have an altitude three times higher than any other continent. When I stepped out of the ski plane at the Pole, my awareness was divided between the 56-degree-below-zero weather and the dizziness of being at almost 10,000 feet. The altitude of the enormous polar plateau is due primarily to ice that is almost two miles thick. Although its ice and snow contain 70 percent of all the fresh water on Earth, Antarctica gets so little precipitation that it is classified as the world's largest desert. And while the continent goes dark for six months in winter, it still receives more sunlight during its six-month-long summer day than the equatorial regions receive in an entire year. Yet all that light creates virtually no surface heat, because most of it is reflected right back up into space. For anyone caught in that crossfire of whiteness, sunglasses are a medical necessity.

The ice shelf expands in winter to seven times its summer maximum. The small population of human beings sent here by 22 nations expands in summer and contracts in winter by proportions almost precisely inverse to those of the ice.

WHILE MOST of Antarctica is the cleanest, most pristine area on Earth, the waters immediately adjacent to the American base are among the most polluted in the world. PCBs and "we don't know what else," dumped years ago, have killed every vestige of life in a small area of McMurdo Sound. The nuclear power plant that leaked in 1962 was dismantled and returned to the United States. But even today the base dumps "diluted" raw sewage directly into the sound and burns its solid waste in an open pit.

In the last few years, several other developments have brought new attention to Antarctica. In 1986 an emergency expedition confirmed the existence of a large and growing polar hole in the stratospheric ozone layer (which protects humans from deadly ultraviolet-B radiation). The same team found incontrovertible evidence that man-made chemicals called chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) were responsible.

A new international agreement was signed this year to reduce CFC production a little, though not enough. Meanwhile, the world's fossil fuels are being burned at such a rapid rate that the resulting carbon dioxide, along with other "greenhouse gases," may have already triggered the long-predicted global warming. At least some scientists said this summer that they are finally convinced.

The air is clearer and crisper in Antarctica than anywhere I've ever been, and visibility is remarkable over great distances. But that can suddenly change, as I learned firsthand, during something known as a "whiteout." The winds of a sudden storm saturate the air so thoroughly with snow that first the horizon, then closer landmarks, and then even the hood of your vehicle can disappear in a shroud of whiteness. Travelers lose their orientation and perspective. Some tell stories of seeing a building in the distance only to find that it was a pack of cigarettes a few feet away. Having just lived through a general election campaign in which Willie Horton was a more prominent political landmark than the budget or trade deficit, I had the feeling I had gone from one whiteout to another.

I CAME HERE because Antarctica is now the frontier of the global ecological crisis. High in the Transantarctic Mountains, a badly sunburned scientist talked about the ice cores he and his team were pulling from a deep hole drilled into the glacier on which we stood. He interpreted the annual layers of ice and snow the way woodsmen read tree rings. "Here is where the U.S. Congress passed the Clean Air Act," he said, pointing to the beginning of the 1970s. Moving down the ice core, back to the early 1960s, he added, "And here is where the world stopped atmospheric nuclear testing." These and other ice cores contain highly accurate information about the makeup of the Earth's atmosphere year by year for tens of thousands of years. From such cores, we know, for example, that there were dramatically lower levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere at the peak of the last Ice Age, 20,000 years ago, when the island of Manhattan was under one kilometer of ice. By contrast, the ice and snow laid down in the 1980s show levels of carbon dioxide, methane, CFCs, nitrous oxide, and other gases responsible for the greenhouse effect higher than they have been in at least 160,000 years (as far back as the ice cores measure). CFCs are receiving particular attention because they cause not only 20 percent of the greenhouse effect but virtually all of the destruction of the ozone layer.

Something else is different about the ice layers from the 1980s—they *look* different to the naked eye because of thick, alternating layers of "hoar" ice, apparently caused by partial melting and recrystallization into larger granules. The scientists are as yet cautiously withholding judgment on whether this is the clear signal of Antarctic warming that many have anticipated.

When I say Antarctica is the frontier of the ecological crisis, I don't mean only that pollution can now be found at the remotest point on Earth. Antarctica is also the place where both ozone destruction and global warming have their first and most dramatic impacts. It is also increasingly apparent that Antarctica plays a far more significant role than any other part of the Earth in the global climate system. For one thing, the cold waters surrounding the continent absorb more carbon dioxide from the atmosphere than all the rain forests, and create the nutrient-rich "bottom water" for most of the world ocean of which Antarctica is the epicenter. Also, aside from the sun and the rotation of the Earth, Antarctica is the single most

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powerful engine driving the world's weather, redistributing its massive coldness through the winds of the air and the currents of the sea. As greenhouse gases trap more heat in the Earth's atmosphere and temperatures climb, they are expected to climb fastest of all here in Antarctica, because any melting at the edge of the ice shelf is accompanied by a dramatic change in the albedo—reflectivity—of the surface exposed to sunlight. The increased absorption of the sun's rays by the ocean then magnifies the local warming trend, melting more ice at the margin and absorbing yet more radiation from the sun.

THERE ARE three potential catastrophes that scientists fear could eventually be caused by the warming of Antarctica. First, a dramatic rise in sea level. This would come not from the melting of sea ice, which is already floating in the ocean, but from a rapid breakup of the massive West Antarctic ice shelf, which scientists believe could then plop into the ocean, raising the sea level 15 to 20 feet, wiping out low-lying coastal cities and nations like Bangladesh. But this is further off than most greenhouse impacts, perhaps 200 years.

Second, something that some scientists worry could occur much sooner is a change in the ability of the Antarctic seas to absorb carbon dioxide as they get warmer. Partly because it is so cold, the southern ocean now absorbs between one-third and one-half of all carbon dioxide emissions from industrial nations. Since carbon dioxide is by far the most important greenhouse gas, we must concern ourselves not only with the rate at which our civilization produces it but also the rate at which the Earth absorbs it.

The Earth has two lungs—the forests and the southern ocean. Unfortunately, we are destroying our forests at the rate of one football field every second, an area the size of Tennessee every year. Since the oceans of the world contain 50 times as much carbon dioxide as the atmosphere, even small changes in the temperature-sensitive mechanisms by which carbon dioxide is transferred back and forth between the oceans and the air can have profound implications.

Third, scientists fear that if their predictions are correct, and temperatures at the poles increase far more rapidly than at the equator, then the very pattern of the world weather system might change. This is because the difference between temperatures at the equator and at the poles has been relatively constant for a long time. As a result, the redistribution of heat from the equator to the poles and cold from the poles to the equator has been accomplished through an essentially constant pattern of wind and ocean currents. If temperatures rise disproportionately in Antarctica, the equilibrium could change, creating new patterns that would redistribute less cold and more heat. Something like this once happened on a small scale in Greenland. The so-called "little ice age" beginning 500 years ago abruptly covered the southern and western agricultural areas that gave Greenland its name with the ice and snow that now make people wonder where the name came from.

Similar though larger and anthropogenic global weather changes now thought to be under way are expected to cause widespread droughts and heat waves within our children's lifetimes. Indeed, some argue they have already begun.

In spite of these enormous stakes and in spite of the central role played by Antarctica, an international scientific conference in Tasmania this fall concluded, "There is no established strategy either for early detection of climate change in Antarctica or understanding and prediction of the probable effect of climate warming on atmospheric and oceanic circulation, ice-sheet volume, and sea level."

Even at that, the scientists are further along than the politicians. Why are we waiting to act?

Perhaps partly because of the unprecedented nature of the crisis. It is simply beyond our experience and outside of what we call common sense. So we put it in the place in our minds where Antarctica exists and tag it with the same mental labels—remote, alien, hopelessly distorted by the maps of the world we inhabit, too hard to get to and too unforgiving for us to stay very long.

The real question is whether the world's political system can find a new equilibrium before the world's climate system loses its current one. Even now, the winds of change are approaching hurricane force. It took a million years for the population of the world to reach two billion. Now, in the course of a single human lifetime—mine—it is rocketing toward ten billion (and is already halfway there). Startling graphs showing the loss of forest land, topsoil, stratospheric ozone, and species all follow the same pattern of sudden, unprecedented acceleration in the latter half of the 20th century. And yet, so far, the pattern of our politics remains remarkably unchanged.

When it does come, the change will involve a new set of global goals, and a new way of thinking about ourselves, our children, and our whole world—even Antarctica.

AL GORE

Al Gore is U.S. senator from Tennessee.

SCIENCE AND SOCIETY

SHUTTLECROCK

THROUGHOUT America's space program, NASA has provided live television coverage of the astronauts eating breakfast and then waving to applauding workers as they board the van that carries them to the launchpad.

Before the shuttle Atlantis blasted off on its recent military mission, NASA put out the familiar images on the morning of launch. But this time they were taped and released after an unspecified delay. The delay, according to NASA, was part of an effort to conceal the planned time of the launch. If a Soviet agent were watching the flyboys eat

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their bacon and eggs, the reasoning goes, he could compute the scheduled lift-off time.

Very tricky. But, according to experts in these matters, the exact planned launch time would be of no use to the Russians. And even if it were, they could have read it weeks before in the trade press.

When the shuttle began flying in 1981, the Air Force demanded that military missions take off in secrecy. NASA, ever eager for public exposure, fought for some coverage. The result was the current set of silly rules. NASA announces that the launch will occur during a three-hour period and counts down publicly only for the last nine minutes.

But those who once worried that the Defense Department would transform the manned space program into another secret military operation can rest easy. The Pentagon, which was to be the shuttle's biggest customer, is bailing out as quickly as it can—and effectively leaving the U.S. shuttle program lost in space.

THE SHUTTLE will fly a few more military missions in the next two years to make up for those backed up after the Challenger disaster. But that's it. All military satellites will thereafter go up on expendable rockets. Lt. Gen. David Cromer, commander of the Air Force Space Division, says that the Air Force has already spent $10 billion buying the rockets and revamping launchpads. The Air Force is abandoning (officially, "mothballing") its shuttle launch facility at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California—the most expensive military installation the United States has ever built. "It is three-and-a-half billion dollars down the drain," according to Senator James Sasser, chairman of the Military Construction Subcommittee. Not content to use NASA's shuttle mission control in Houston, the Air Force built its own in Colorado Springs. It, too, is now useless, but at $400 million, we should probably consider it a bargain.

The shuttle was supposed to pay for itself by launching all American satellites, military and civilian—a fantasy that originated in the Nixon White House and persisted through succeeding administrations until the Challenger exploded. NASA, the "can do" agency, always went along, saying at first that it could launch the shuttle 60 times a year and then gradually reducing the estimate to the still unachievable goal of 24 a year just before the accident.

Few Air Force leaders bought the idea. They felt that a vehicle with people on board could never be as reliable as expendable rockets. "Air Force officials thought that Congress and the White House were shoving the shuttle down their throats," said Marcia Smith, a space analyst with the Library of Congress, "and they told anyone who would listen."

Even while planning to launch their satellites from the shuttle and constructing Vandenberg (which cost 3½ times more than it was supposed to), Air Force officials—particularly Air Force Secretary Edward Aldridge—continued asking Congress for expendable rockets. They received a chilly reception until the abortive maiden flight of the shuttle Discovery in June 1984. The engines shut down three seconds before scheduled lift-off and flames shot up around the launchpad. Although NASA played down the incident in public, privately many saw it as a near disaster.

After several less spectacular shuttle delays, Aldridge—who recently resigned to work for McDonnell Douglas—got what he wanted. In March 1985 the Air Force was allowed to award a $5 million contract to Martin Marietta to design the Titan IV, an expendable rocket that can carry as much weight as the shuttle. Before the Challenger accident the Air Force ordered only five Titan IVs. After it, Congress allowed the Air Force to buy rockets galore. Forty-five Titan IVs are on order, and the Air Force is purchasing smaller rockets from General Dynamics and McDonnell Douglas.

Following the Challenger disaster, President Reagan signed orders stipulating that the shuttle should no longer carry commercial communications satellites into orbit. These will be launched on expendable rockets by the rocket manufacturers. So without the commercial and military payloads, the business that NASA fought so hard for in the '70s and early '80s, what's the shuttle to do?

Not a whole lot. The Strategic Defense Initiative program has a few missions it wants to fly on the shuttle. But Pentagon officials have told Congress repeatedly that they have no need for humans in space. NASA has proved that shuttle astronauts can capture, repair, and refuel satellites in orbit. Most military satellites fly in polar orbits that the shuttle can't attain. And although the Air Force indeed wants to repair and refuel its reconnaissance, tracking, and communications satellites in space, it plans to do so with robots, not people.

The shuttle will continue to carry out scientific missions, including more flights of the spacelab and launches of unmanned spacecraft to explore the solar system. But after suffering the shuttle's delays, the leaders of the missions to the outer planets would prefer to go the way of the military and commercial users—expendable rockets.

THE MESSY DIVORCE between the military and the space shuttle is just the latest bureaucratic disaster to befall our directionless space program, with more certain to follow. NASA now wants to build a space station that nobody quite knows what to do with. Never mind that we once had one (Skylab) that was almost twice as big as Mir, the Soviet station now parked in the cosmos. And NASA and the Air Force each wants to spend billions on new rockets to carry heavy payloads. NASA once had such a rocket (Saturn V), and it worked perfectly, sending the Apollos to the moon. But when Apollo ended, no one kept sufficiently detailed manufacturing plans to allow the country to build Saturn Vs ever again.

Next year Congress and the White House must make a series of crucial decisions about America's future in space. Bush's aides have said they will set up a council to develop a coherent long-term policy that encompasses both military and civilian needs. The man in charge? Dan Quayle.

ROBERT BAZELL

Robert Bazell is the science correspondent for NBC News.

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George Bush, cartoonist's nightmare.

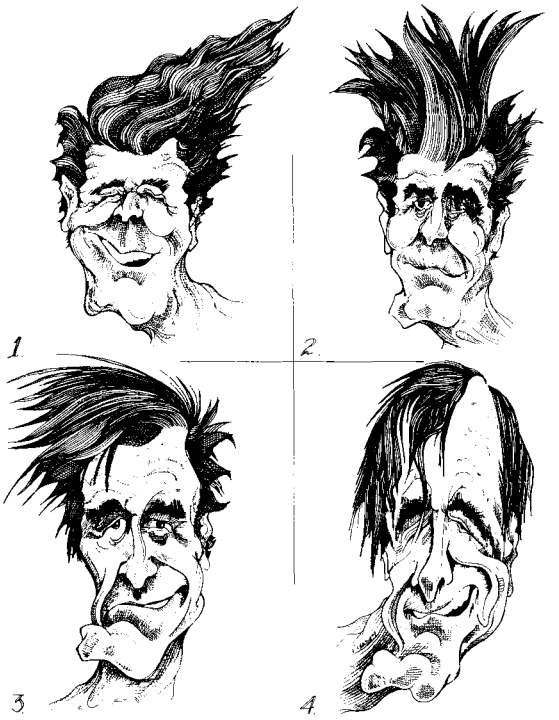
ERASERFACE

THE PRACTITIONERS of my profession, dependent as we are upon the visual, are in serious trouble. As political phrenologists (some may say anthroposcopists—those who practice the science of reading character into the face—but ours is a vocation that defies labels), we are charged with the delicate task of limning the character of our political leaders. Facing us quite literally is a task of lead-shattering, nib-curling proportions. We are eyeball to eyeball with George Bush, trying to read his lips.

We are going through a transition period that our colleagues in print have little understanding of and precious little sympathy for. Overlooked by them in this time of summing up is that Ronald Reagan, above all, was a man who knew how to pose. A model, indeed, of mythic proportions. Always ready to stand there rock solid and unmoving in one heroic costume after another. Patient and affable, that face with its astonishing longevity remained the same regardless of what was put on it, under it, and around it. All that one could do was to carve the lines deeper, add a wrinkle or two, and pull the pompadour. Never mind that the line between the fantasy and real life got blurry after a while, posing is hard work.

Consider for a moment that for me alone Ronald Reagan cheerfully posed as the Laocoön, as Darth Vader, as a magic carpet salesman, as Little Bo Peep, as countless cowboys, as the pope, as FDR, as Dorothy in Oz, as Solomon, as Johnny Carson, as a Star Wars Snow Walker, as a Chinese mandarin, as Bruce Springsteen, as King Henry III, as a Reverse Robin Hood, as Rhett Butler, as Norman Rockwell, as Don Quixote, as the Music Man, as a Japanese samurai, as Fritz's Temple of Doom, as Rambo, and as the Great Gipper going out with his merry band of players. We'll not see a troupe the likes of them for a long time.

So much for nostalgia. We must look ahead. Now we have George Herbert Walker Poppy Have-Half Bertie-Wooster Bush in the chair. Let's start with the face and get the worst over with. We'll do it in stages.



As you can see we're in trouble already. So WASPishly self-effacing, it is a face that does not parse. There are extra joints in there that no stylish hat nor sweeping costume can support. It's no wonder that at least one of our most creative cartoonists (Mr. Trudeau) has given up trying to capture that visage altogether. But that is shirking our responsibility of coming to grips with Mr. Bush.

Perhaps there is something in the figure of the man. After all, he was a great athlete (batted .280 at Yale and is always jogging). But no, it does not get better. There does not seem to be much there. Visually the president-elect, I regret to say, sags—sort of the male version of the debutante slouch. Clearly I will need some time to find a way to support him, and it won't be easy. So for the moment let us leave him where he seems to want to be—draped comfortably over those elitist Maine rocks outside his Kennebunkport home with some puritanical reading matter to ease his mind—like an L.L. Bean catalog from which to pick his Cabinet.

VINT LAWRENCE

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Deterring collective crime.

CORPORATE PUNISHMENT

IN AN unprecedented—some might say zany—decision, a federal judge in Virginia recently imposed a prison sentence on the Allegheny Bottling Company. It's not clear how Judge Doumar expected to imprison an artificial legal entity, and we're unlikely ever to find out, since he suspended the sentence and the case is on appeal. The judge resorted to this extraordinary sentence, he said, because he didn't know how else to impose a meaningful punishment on a corporation that could easily afford to pay the maximum legal fine.

Judge Doumar's frustration has a long and honorable history. Two centuries ago, an English judge lamented that a corporation has "no soul to be damned, and no body to be kicked." In an era of insider trading and Pentagon scandals, the problem is more pressing than ever. When a corporation violates the law, how is it to be punished?

The U.S. Sentencing Commission recently began holding hearings on this subject. One of the first truths it arrived at is that the system for sentencing corporations is in a state of serious disrepair. First of all, corporate fines are inconsistent. Sometimes, the commission found, the fine was two or three times the harm caused by the crime, while in almost identical cases it would be only a fraction of the harm.

Second, the fines are often puny. Half of the convicted corporations are fined $5,000 or less, an amount even most small companies can cover out of petty cash. Third, the fine structure is perverse. The commission found that the penalties for petty crimes were large enough to exceed the corporation's gains, but crimes causing more serious harm received proportionately smaller penalties. On average, a corporate crime that caused a $5,000 loss would result in a $12,000 penalty. This is at least *some* deterrent. But if the crime had caused a $200,000 loss, the penalty would be only about $120,000. Even if Company X were sure of getting caught, its shareholders would profit from the crime. In short: big-time corporate crime pays.

To correct that criminal equation, the commission's staff has proposed an entirely new method of imposing fines. Basically, it would work like this: Step one, determine the amount of harm done. Step two, determine the "multiplier," which is supposed to be the corporation's chances of escaping detection. Step three, multiply the two figures, and there's the fine (with a few other possible adjustments).

Take a case where a corporation has chiseled $20,000 off its taxes, where the fine for doing so is also $20,000, and where the odds of being caught are about 50-50. Half the corporations will get away with tax fraud, while the other half will merely have to pay back the money. This is a winning proposition for the company, so management and shareholders have an incentive to look the other way when the returns are filled out. In fact, low-level employees may feel pressured to commit crimes in order to increase profits. To destroy the profitability of tax fraud, we would have to double the penalty to balance the 50 percent chance of detection. So a $40,000 fine is in order.

The staff's proposal incorporates this principle, but like the current system of fines, it still fails to take the profit out of corporate crimes. Consider a "midnight dumper"—a company that dumps toxic chemicals in the nearest river. It's very hard to estimate a monetary value for the harm done by the dumping. The guidelines arbitrarily assign a value of $10,000 for this offense. The maximum multiplier in the case of all crimes is 3.5, so the *maximum* fine is $35,000—not much of a penalty for intentionally endangering the public health, and hardly deterrent enough when set beside the often high cost of *legally* dumping toxic waste. The 3.5 multiplier is too low. If we detect only ten percent of price fixers, as the Justice Department thinks, we probably catch a similar proportion of midnight dumpers. So the multiplier should be more like ten. And $100,000 doesn't seem like much either. Consider the way we treat the corporate officer who ordered the dumping. Under the sentencing guidelines for individuals, someone who dumps toxic waste without a permit would spend about two years behind bars—but the corporation gets only a slap on the wrist. Something is wrong here.

Economist Gary Becker has pointed out that if you impose extremely strict penalties, you can get a lot of deterrence without having to punish very many people, so you can save on law enforcement expenses. In other words, if we were to hang a price fixer now and then, we could probably cut the size of the Antitrust Division and still scare the remaining culprits into obeying the law. At some point, draconian penalties run the risk of becoming unfair or counterproductive, but the commission's proposal hardly reaches that point.

STILL, stiffer fines cannot do the job alone. In a world of perfect economic rationality, establishing the correct schedule of fines would automatically lead to the correct behavioral responses. This won't happen in the real world, for two reasons. First, a certain amount of economic irrationality prevails in the business world. Some corporate officers will be willing to gamble on getting away with their crimes; some shareholders won't pay enough attention no matter what incentives we give them. Second, judges probably won't be willing to impose high enough fines in some cases. They'll be leery of punishing "innocent" shareholders, bankrupting companies, or causing plant shutdowns that injure innocent workers. No matter how the commission decides the issues of fines, something more is needed.

That something more is contained in a report sent to the commission by a group headed by Professor Jack Coffee of Columbia Law School. The Coffee report proposes an intriguing complement to corporate fines. You can't put a corporation in jail, but you *can* put it on probation, a permissible but rarely used alternative for corporations under current law.

Coffee's proposal conjures up the pleasing picture of top

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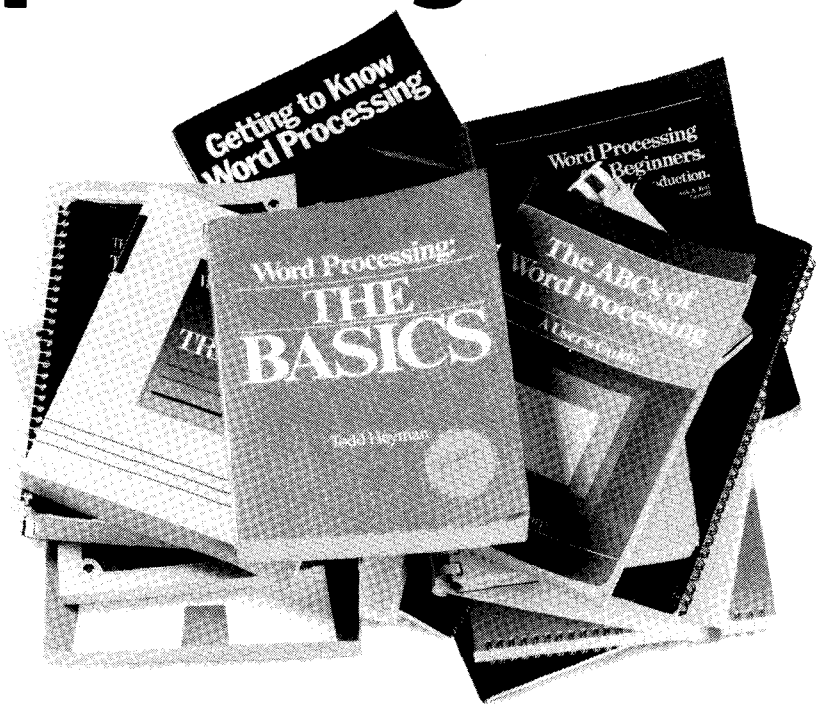

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executives reporting in to their probation officer once a week. ("Did you stay off drugs? Associate with any felons? Gouge any consumers?") While this is no more than an amusing fantasy, it underscores one purpose of Coffee's proposal—to make a point of treating corporations like "real criminals." Fines, even stiff ones, don't have that effect. In one sense, fines actually legitimize criminal conduct by putting a price on it. They're reduced to yet another one of the costs of doing business. Probation is a reminder that, ultimately, corporate criminals are no better than street punks.

The main purpose of probation, however, is to force the company to set up effective controls to prevent future crimes. This is particularly important because, like street criminals, many corporate criminals are recidivists. The first condition of probation would be a complete investigation into how the crime occurred and why management allowed it. The company might then be required to prepare a "compliance plan" detailing how it intends to prevent future violations. The plan could require an independent audit committee, appointment of independent counsel or independent directors, or the use of special consultants. The idea is the same as that behind corporate fines: that it is cheaper for companies to police themselves than for Washington to police them.

The commission is still holding public hearings on corporate punishment, so there's some hope that it won't adopt the weak-kneed fine proposal now under consideration. But there's also the chance that the Supreme Court will hold the commission itself to be unconstitutional, a violation of separation of powers. (This is just what some federal judges, resentful of the commission's encroachment on their sentencing discretion, are hoping.) In that case the whole sentencing reform movement may have to start over. If that happens, we can expect judges to go back to their old familiar ways: inadequate corporate fines, arbitrarily assessed. For corporate criminals, that means business as usual.

DANIEL FARBER

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Israel's hyperdemocracy.

REVENGE OF THE RABBIS

BY EDWARD NORDEN

THE SITUATION in the Jewish state in the wake of the parliamentary elections of 1988 is exceptionally kooky, even by local standards. First the Likud, after successfully wooing enough small religious parties to build a coalition, forsook them to woo the Labor Party, which, after a sustained, heartrending flirtation, demurred—or, at least, seemed to demur. At last check, the Likud was returning to Plan A, and the Labor Party was embroiled in a vicious intramural battle over its past and future. By the time you read this, the plot will doubtless have taken another twist but is unlikely to be much closer to resolution.

How did things get this messed up?

The Knesset elections were supposed to be fateful, epoch-making. Of course, as almost any taxi driver here in Jerusalem could have predicted, they haven't been anything of the kind. Above all, they didn't answer the question of whether we Israelis are going to hold on to the occupied territories, come what may, or whether we'd be ready to part with them if enough of us were persuaded that after doing so we might be able to lead safer, saner lives.

The reason the elections didn't constitute that great referendum is that the other side had put nothing on the table that would have made such a choice unavoidable; neither Hussein nor Arafat had done a Sadat.

What the elections have done is to confirm what everybody should already have known: this country is politically paralyzed. Neither of the two biggest parties can beg, borrow, or steal more than a third of the seats in the Knesset, while a mob of little single-issue outfits commands more mandates together than either the Likud or Labor alone.

Were the elections useless then? Not quite. They did bring out one new democratic fact, and that is that rabbis residing in Zion and abroad, dangling blessings and threatening curses, can get out more voters than the political scientists thought. They can mobilize enough voters, in fact, to make it impossible for either of the big parties to put together a governing coalition except by their grace.

A smart taxi driver, one with eyes and ears, could have predicted this too. After all, the black-hatted Jews for the last generation have been having more children than anyone else in the country, including the Arabs. Because Jewish history is going through a certain phase, their kids, upon turning 18, are unlikely to question, much less ditch,

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their upbringing. The very least they'll do is vote as their *rebbe* says, and in this election, many did much more; exempt from the draft, they actually took a rest from their studies and hit the streets with a zeal not seen since Richard Daley ruled Chicago.

Maybe all the experts assumed or hoped that the various sects, among which no love is lost, would neutralize each other, or that voter discipline in the ghettos would be less than perfect, or that many of the rabbis would hesitate, as they had in the past, before ordering their flocks to participate in a secular ritual. Maybe the experts didn't think that the trust withdrawn from Godless politicians and generals after the Yom Kippur War would find a substitute focus in the rabbis.

If so, the experts were wrong. The rabbis could and did call out their divisions.

Add to these troops the born-again Jews formerly of the kibbutzim, the Soviet Union, and Scarsdale, and those dyed-in-the-wool Likudniks who voted for the Agudat Yisrael party when they heard that Menahem Schneerson, the ultraorthodox rabbi from Brooklyn's Crown Heights, wouldn't bless them if they didn't, and you come up with no less than 13 Jewish Knesset members who have at least one thing in common with Mohammed Miari of the Progressive List for Peace and the Arab communist Toufik Toubi: if you ask them what they think about Zionism, they won't give you a straight answer. Because, of course, they don't think much of it.

That's the rub, and that's why the elections of 1988 may yet go down in history as fateful. For while the balloting is over, the Israeli government remains to be made.

WHAT'S IT GOING to look like? A full month of maneuvers has passed since President Herzog asked Premier Yitzhak Shamir to try to form a new government, and everything, as they say, is still up in the air. If God is really with Israel, the two big Zionist parties will finally get together again and make another so-called national unity government, without the rabbis. (This remains the most likely scenario, notwithstanding the Labor Party's recent maneuvers.) Yet there's also a chance that as a result of how we voted, and due to our cockeyed electoral system, a so-called narrow Likud or narrow Labor government may be born that will send Herzl, Jabotinski, Weizmann, and Ben-Gurion revolving in their graves. These gentlemen, who in other respects were as different as can be, all dedicated their lives to the idea that we Jews should and can be free men in our own country. None of them foresaw a day when, that country having been established, a nod from Crown Heights could make or topple a government in Jerusalem.

For as Shamir and Labor Party chief Shimon Peres know, once either of them cuts a separate deal with the rabbinical parties, and signs a coalition agreement with them including a promise to amend the Law of Return, and hands over the ministries of religious affairs, housing, welfare, immigrant absorption, and the interior, plus the chairmanship of the Knesset Finance Committee and control of the state lottery, that may or may not be the end of the story. Who's to say the religious parties won't then up the ante—for example, by demanding that building of the Jerusalem extension of Hebrew Union College, funded by Reform Jews in the States, be halted.

The sanguine, cynical view that Shamir and Peres may be entertaining in these days of horse-trading and soul-searching is that rabbis who go in for politics are of two types—those who were already corrupt and those who become corrupt as a result. Either way, they play the game and don't rock the boat too much once they've gotten what's coming to them.

According to this version, once the religious parties have gotten their laws, budgets, and ministries, Shamir, or Peres, won't have to lose sleep over the constant possibility that the non-Zionists in a narrowly based government might bring it down with insatiable demands.

There's something to be said for this analysis. After all, threats to leave in a huff are only good if no one calls your bluff, and the money and patronage, not to mention the prestige, that the rabbinical parties would enjoy and deploy in a government beholden to them would be hard to forfeit on principle.

Besides, the psychologists in these parties realize that Israel's sun 'n' surf population—the seculars, who for the time being still constitute the vast majority—is feeling nervous. The final goal of the Orthodox rabbis here, who consider themselves the only rabbis worthy of the name, is, of course, to replace the Knesset and the Israeli Supreme Court with the Sanhedrin, the all-powerful court that ran the lives of Jews two millennia ago. But softly. The better part of valor now would be to dig in at the new line, digest the territory won, and put the next, inevitable offensive off. As Rabbi Peretz of the Shas Party says on TV, there's absolutely nothing to worry about.

ON THE other hand, even in this country it's never wise to be too cynical. The supremos of these parties, unlike Shamir and Peres, tell the press that God is guiding their every step, and in some corner of their minds they may even believe it. Those who sincerely believe, even if only sometimes, that they are God's deputies, and who mention redemption on television, are also liable to break the cozy rules of parliamentary politics. You can't take such men for granted for four years.

Which is why the prospect of sitting around a Cabinet table with their acolytes, and with various physicists and ex-generals who outflank him on the right, doesn't enchant Yitzhak Shamir. Whatever you can say against him, you can't deny that he's a Zionist and a patriot. Also, though he doesn't say it in so many words, he seems to comprehend that this country isn't supernatural, and that it musn't go looking for more trouble than it already has. This obviously means, among other things, keeping the resolution of certain differences of opinion among its citizens, and between them and their brethren in exile, on hold. Shamir isn't rushing to preside over a government whose first legislative act will be to tell the men and women who lobby for us on Capitol Hill that their rabbis are

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imposters and their marriages bogus. When he says that in spite of everything he wants to team up with the Labor Party again, Shamir is probably speaking the truth.

In political fashions as in religious trends, we Jews take our cues from the goyim. When Jews from Aleppo to Amsterdam sold their possessions and packed their bags on hearing that Sabtai Sebi was the Messiah, this was in large measure because apocalypticism was then the rage among the Christians, and if the Israeli Labor Party hasn't a prayer in the foreseeable future of winning the premiership, this isn't just its own fault, or a consequence of local conditions, but a reflection of the decade-long decline of social democratic parties everywhere—see Michael Dukakis and Neil Kinnock. Therefore, we shouldn't be too hard on Peres.

Still, it's true that in the last couple of years he's made some very bad mistakes. In 1986, as soon as he rotated out of the prime minister's office and into the Foreign Ministry, he started wooing Hussein with the international peace conference idea. It was a not-so-secret courtship that blighted the statesmanlike image Peres had managed to create as temporary premier. Again, any taxi driver could have told you that Mr. Ordinary Israeli considered the international conference to be, at best, a mythical animal, something like the unicorn. Yet Peres continued harping on it, to his own and his party's great disadvantage, and even made it the centerpiece of Labor's losing campaign.

In addition to this strategic blunder, he's also committed his share of tactical errors. Peres doesn't seem to have understood that the pre-election excommunication of Meir Kahane by the Supreme Court on grounds of racism could only harm his own camp electorally and benefit Shamir's, so he didn't ask Shinui center party boss Amnon Rubinstein to refrain from pushing the button on the legal machinery.

Then, after the election, the beaten Peres sucked up first to the Shas Party and then to Agudat Yisrael, either in the vain hope of setting up his own narrow government, or with the aim of rattling Shamir and forcing him to agree again to a rotating premiership. This demolished what was left of the good image he had built as prime minister, and revealed him again as the Shimon Peres of old, the one who was eaten up by ambition and not to be trusted.

PERES IS GIFTED and intelligent, a man whose ambition has sometimes been an asset for Israel and could yet be again. But it's doubtful that even if he'd played it more intelligently, or if he could somehow have been replaced as the party's No. 1 by the more popular Yitzhak Rabin, Labor could have come out on top in the polls. There's the international social democratic decline. And locally, there's the feeling since Yom Kippur 1973 that the Laborites aren't the best people to deal with the Arabs, neither in war nor in peace-making.

This doesn't mean there's a consensus that the heirs of Ben-Gurion should have no part in trying to govern this country. On the contrary, from what can be inferred from the foggy election results, and from sniffing the air in most streets, you have to conclude that if there's a will of the people, it corresponds to Shamir's expressed wish, namely, that Likud and Labor go on living together, leaving the black hats and the Communists to do the duty of the opposition. For if another Likud-Labor government would be not a national unity government, but a government of national paralysis, consider the only alternative, a government piloted by the Lubavitcher *rebbe* of Crown Heights.

This would be an Israeli government born in sin: the not-so-brilliant sin of informing most of the Jews in the world that they're not so Jewish—and all the while expecting these same Class-B Jews to go on giving us money and voting against any congressperson or MP who even hints that the Jewish state and all its works aren't marvelous.

THE PEOPLE, then, may not be quite as thick as they're sometimes made out. Most of them still seem not to want any adventures—not an international conference, and not redemption. This is the message that can be read through the static produced by our wacky electoral system. Do the Likud and Labor politicians hear it? And if they do, will they heed it?

Maybe not. Even if Shamir and Moshe Arens and Rabin and Peres all want to cobble something together—which for various reasons they do—this doesn't ensure that they can deliver their respective parties.

In Labor, a majority of the party's 120-member bureau is now on record against it. They say that to join such a government would be to consent to being its fifth wheel and would betray everything Labor stands for. The authentic, the honorable thing to do, they say, would be to get up and go into a fighting opposition.

That's what they say in public, and they may well be sincere. But there's more to it than that. Out of microphone range, some of these nay-sayers can be heard expressing sentiments consistent with the philosophy of the-worse-the-better, also known as the Let-Them-Stew-In-Their-Own-Jews school. The idea here is that if the Likud can make a narrow government with the cast of characters listed above, by all means let it. If the Israeli voter can only be educated by a spell of clerico-fascism, *tant pis*. When things have gone too far, he'll wise up and call for the Laborites, and they'll ride in on their white chargers.

The only problem with this approach is the near-certainty that Labor won't make much of an opposition. It didn't exactly shine in that role in its first try, between 1977 and 1984, and there's small chance that it will this time. It'll be a fighting opposition, all right—it will fight fiercely with itself, first over who is to blame for the debacle of the elections, and then over who is to take over the party.

For without a doubt, Peres, Rabin, Weizmann, and Bar-Lev will be made to join Abba Eban in retirement. The faces who have led Labor to four defeats in a row will have to go, as younger blood demands its day. There's nothing wrong with that. It's nature's way. But if local practice holds, Peres and Company will make way for new faces neither quickly nor gracefully. They'll have to be driven

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out in a cruel, extended series of battles, and while these matters are being settled, the Zionist opposition in the Knesset will effectively be reduced to Amnon Rubinstein of the Shinui party, Shulamith Aloni of the Citizens' Rights Movement, and Yair Tsaban of the Mapam party.

ON THE Likud side, too, there are those who are against a broad coalition for reasons of pure ideology, pure ambition, or both. Under cohabitation, the Likud would be hamstrung, and there are only so many ministries to be parcelled out. Can Shamir and Arens deliver the kicking and screaming Ariel Sharon? It's dicey.

Peres has reckoned that the chances of a "wide" government being formed are "no more than 30 percent at this point." This is a smart thing for him to say as his lieutenants and Shamir's huddle (first with each other and then with the rabbis). Realizing as he does that if there isn't such a government his career is over, Peres mustn't get his hopes up. At the same time, if he is to keep his self-respect, if he is to convince his party's 600-member central committee to reverse itself and overturn the bureau's decision, and if he is to serve the country, he mustn't go in at any price. He must insist that Shamir be more than magnanimous.

This means that if there's another national unity government, Shamir will probably have to agree to rotate the premiership again, and Labor, which won only one Knesset seat less than the Likud, will have to be given its pick of two of the three portfolios of defense, foreign affairs, and finance. Rabin, it's assumed, will stay at the Defense Ministry. And Peres, if he's wise and patriotic, will leave the Foreign Ministry, where he's accomplished so little, and go over to the Treasury.

That's where the most important action is going to be in the next few years. It's where Peres, a political loser but an excellent technician, is needed, and where he can help save not only the ailing Koor conglomerate (owned by the Histadrut, the labor federation that is such a big part of Israel's socialist legacy) but the whole sickly economy. Noshe Nissim and Yitzhak Moda'i of the Likud can't be expected to step politely aside, of course—the former wants to retain the finance post, and the latter, who was kicked out of it by Peres, to return like Douglas MacArthur. Nor is Moda'i the only member of Shamir's party who loathes Peres and, ambitions aside, aches to see him pensioned off.

This is Shamir's test—can he measure up to Menachem Begin, can he rise above these Jewish wars, can he impose his will on his party for the good of the country? Is he capable, for the first time since he came up from underground, of leading, and not just stonewalling? All it will take is a small miracle.

This country, however, is where more than a few miracles have been reported. No fewer than 70 reserve generals and brigadier generals, including Tel Aviv's Likud Mayor Shlomo Lahat, have asked Shamir not to make a government with parties that encourage draft dodging (i.e., the ultraorthodox parties). And the distress signal of American Jewish bigwigs who have been showing up on every incoming flight also seems to be sinking in, not only with the Man in the Street but even some politicians. A petition asking the Knesset to keep its hands off the Law of Return—signed by a million Jews in North America—is expected any day. All this improves the prospects for another ironically named national unity government.

If Peres can get a rotating premiership, in addition to the Treasury, there'll be such a government (though crossing all the t's and dotting all the i's may take even longer than the two months it took in 1984). There'll be leaks, feints and scenes, last-minute ultimatums, and hairbreadth escapes. But it could happen.

One of the virtues of such a government is that it will be able to finesse the quasi-promises both Shamir and Peres have already made to the rabbis. Everything in its platform of basic guidelines could be fuzzed—everything, that is, except a clause affirming that within six months of this government's birth, the electoral reform bill (which got through its first reading in the Knesset's last session before being buried in committee) will be spruced up and submitted to the full plenum, where all 79 representatives of the Likud and Labor will be obligated to vote for it.

There's no guarantee that, if and when it's passed, this law modifying the only purely proportional system of representation in the world would render us more governable. The problem may be too deeply rooted; perhaps the mentality we acquired during a hundred generations of exile, swinging between rabbi-worship and anarchy, is beyond remedy.

MORE THAN A few Israelis think it's worth a try, however, if only to be able to tell Ben-Gurion's ghost that we did our best. As everyone knows, it was he who, right after the first Knesset election in 1949, complained that due to the wretched proportional system, little parties "whose programs held no interest for the majority of the nation" could employ "extortion" to deprive that majority of "its basic democratic right of a real choice of government." The Old Man, authoritative as he was, could never get the reform he wanted, and so had to do deals almost as savory as those that have been cooking in back rooms over the last month.

It's not only goody-goody liberals here who are convinced that a halfway decent electoral system can't wait. The realization spreads into the Likud as well. How long can any nut who persuades 25,000 like-minded nuts to vote for him get into the Knesset and hold the rest of the country for ransom? And is there really nothing a politician can do to sweeten his name as he nears the end? Short of peace with the Palestinians—a blessing no Jew has it in his power to bring about or even hasten—the best legacy Shamir and Peres could give their countrymen is this electoral change, which can be brought off only by a "national unity" government.

Of course, such a government could always forget to reform the law. In that case, it would do no more than postpone the *kulturkampf* that is about to break out, the winners of which will be all those who wish the worst for the Jews both in and outside their resurrected state. □

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Writers: Credits and Discredits

David Puttnam made a grim statement recently (reported in *Variety*). Puttnam, who was for a few years the head of Columbia Pictures, is now the head of a consortium for which he is to produce at least six films. Speaking about British screenwriting in London where he is based, he said that in the year on his new job, he has received 550 scripts, two of which were "memorable." The rest were "mediocre."

The mediocre, or worse, always outnumber the memorable, but Puttnam's report is startling from the country that in recent years gave us *My Beautiful Laundrette*, *Wish You Were Here*, *Withnail and I*, *Sid and Nancy*, and *Rita, Sue, and Bob Too*, among others. His comment reminds us that, even in a thriving film community, a worldwide condition prevails. Screenwriting lags behind every other aspect of filmmaking.

It has always lagged behind. Directing and acting and cinematography and design and the other components of film have always been more dependably good than writing. Week after week in this column and in the box on this page, I note films in which all the elements except the scripts are commendable. I can think of only one recent example in which the script seemed the best element in the film: Peter Handke's screenplay for *Wings of Desire*. There is one inferable reason for the worldwide imbalance: writing for performance (this applies to the theater too) is more difficult than any other element in performance. Still, fixed though this condition is, the problem worries. Some specifics about current screenwriting—I'll limit myself to America rather than take on the entire globe—need to be examined.

Is American screenwriting worse than it used to be? No and yes. No, because since the beginning, our screenwriting has predominantly been an industrial function. Collaborations had always existed in fiction and drama, but collaboration acquired a quite different meaning when the film studios were organized and tooled up. In a valuable anthology of historical essays called *The Classical Hollywood Cinema*, Janet Staiger describes how by 1913, the writing of screenplays in the studios developed along assembly-line principles, "some workers excelling in creating stories, others in rewriting. . . . It was customary by the early '20s for scripts to travel through several writers or groups of writers." When sound arrived and dialogue was wanted, the person who wrote it, often imported from the East, was called a word man, as I was once told by a word man.

This assembly-line system remained in place as long as there were studios operating like factories. (Before we snoot down from Olympus, let's remember that almost all the films we cherish from the Hollywood Golden Age came from those factories.) The collaborative system still persists to a degree in these days of independent production, though the teams are ad hoc, not staff employees. The ad hoc collaboration doesn't give the writers the same firmament they once worked under, and it deprives films of the studio hallmarks they once had, but it can't be said that the current level of writing—particularly of dialogue—is worse than the prevailing level in the studio era. In flexibility of diction, in verity, it's usually better.

But in another view, in the view from post-studio days, screenwriting is worse now. In the postwar years huge changes took place. First, the studios dwindled away because, among other reasons, TV exploded. Some of the old names still flourish—Paramount, Warner, MGM, Columbia—but they don't represent studios each turning out dozens of films a year: they are mostly incubators and distributors for independent producers, who make pictures only when they find ones they want to make.

Second, outstanding new foreign films flooded into the consciousness of some Americans in the turbulent 1960s, especially younger ones around universities, and helped to create a phenomenon that I called the Film Generation. This generation, without disavowing the best achievements of Hollywood—in fact, with increased appreciation of them—pressed for American films to emulate those European and Japanese films, to develop an "art cinema." That's the phrase used by David Bordwell and Janet Staiger in *The Classical Hollywood Cinema*, defined thus: "The art cinema is concerned less with action than with reaction; it is a cinema of psychological effects in search of their causes. . . . Realism and authorial expressivity [are] the means whereby the art film unifies itself."

The postwar art cinema eventually affected American mainstream production because some of the younger people touched by it came into the film world and because film producers wanted to reach that newly stirred Film Generation. So, beginning around 1970, for a dozen years or so, we got such films as *The Hired Hand*, *Pocket Money*, *Wanda*, *Go Tell the Spartans*, *The Conversation* (along with hundreds of routine works, of course). Certainly many of the screenplays of these "new" films were collaborations and rewrites—often with more

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Buster. The Great Bank Robbery of 1963. Yet another perfect-crime story but vitalized by unusual (factual) character traits. And by good acting. (Reviewed 12/19/88)

A Cry in the Dark. Another fact-crime story—this one a celebrated Australian murder case. Meryl Streep plays the mother of a murdered infant and *becomes* Australian, but is crimped by a screenplay that saw nothing in the story but the facts. (12/5/88)

Far North. Sam Shepard wrote and directed this funny, lively, disheveled attempt at a modern folk tale. Jessica Lange excels in this quasi-ballad that has a horse for a villain. (11/28/88)

Hotel Terminus. Klaus Barbie's life, especially after the Second World War, examined by Marcel Ophuls—at somewhat too great length but with grim revelations. (10/24/88)

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people involved than were credited—but they seemed whole-souled and personal, in search of "causes" rather than "effects," because they were not begun with a studio quota as a reason for being and with the writers' assembly line as a given part of the process.

In this decade the impulse toward an American art cinema has faltered, chiefly because expenses have zoomed. Today the average cost of a technically first-class film is from $15 million to $20 million, astronomically more than what it was in 1970. Producers, quite understandably, want to reach the widest possible audience. The spirit of adventure that to some extent flourished for a while in American films is shackled.

So American screenwriting today is twice bereft. It lacks the sense of residence and program that the full-functioning studio once gave it, and it no longer has much chance for 1970s heterodoxy. Of course we still get some good entertainments; less often we get a film that defies prevailing straitened conditions—*Housekeeping*, *Hamburger Hill*, *House of Games*, *Far North*. But veristic though the dialogue is, most American screenwriting now seems a bid at a roulette table, neither slick engineering for a reliable audience nor personal conviction.

Will the present situation change? Well, we shouldn't look to the filmmakers for change, we should look to the film public. Filmmakers, except for the merest handful, don't lead: they try to respond and follow. Unless the public shows signs of discontent with the run of the mill, the mill will keep running, and screenwriters will continue to provide grist for it. Change in the public is less likely to come for aesthetic reasons than for social ones. Though the Film Generation was greatly impressed by the cinematic quality of postwar foreign films, it was even more impressed by their unconstrained treatment of relevant subject matter, from the deeply personal, the subjective, to the political. Social interests and unease may again filter through the American public until they reach the Coast.

It may seem overly sanguine to hope for social sensitization at a time when half the electorate doesn't vote and the majority of the other half votes for a government pledged to continue a rule of complacency. Yet the sedated Eisenhower years were followed by a much more volatile decade. Besides, in life, as in art, we have to rely on the exceptions, the unpredictable. Heightened dissatisfactions, spiritual and temporal, may lead to an anger against films that don't deal with current troubles in any significant way, and this anger may lead to film-world response. So even though the American film road ahead looks rather bland and smooth—to paraphrase the Mankiewicz line from *All About Eve*—let's fasten our seatbelts and hope for a bumpy ride.

EDWARD ROTHSTEIN ON MUSIC

The Twilight Fantasies of Elliott Carter

Someday even the postman will sing my melodies. —Anton Webern

Anyone who has ever unexpectedly come upon a composition by Elliott Carter at a concert will recognize the sensation. First, bafflement at the barrage of seemingly random sounds, the long leaps of lines that could hardly be called melodic, the shifting tempi that seem to meander from dragging melancholy to spritely chaos, the chords and clusters that burst textures rather than create them. The bafflement will be followed, for most, by something resembling rage, particularly since part of the audience is bound to appear enraptured by the same sounds. What gargantuan pretense, the confused might think, for so many to act so entranced by so much aural offense.

In the case of Elliott Carter, if art were judged by democratic principles, the nays would have it. Carter's admirers are devoted and sophisticated—they include the educated elite of the musical world—but one could hardly call Carter well known, or widely loved. He is more widely feared. Even many critics have little to say in his favor; it's become commonplace to dismiss him as "academic" and "intellectual" (as opposed to the acclaimed composers of the ersatz "avant-garde" who make obvious gestures toward a broader audience). By this reasoning, Carter is both elitist and retrograde, and his music is a symptom of an art gone awry.

This is a remarkable situation for America's senior composer. His 80th birthday is being internationally celebrated in December with performances and new recordings. He lacks no honor or recognition (two Pulitzer Prizes, the National Medal of Arts, the Gold Medal of the National Institute of Arts and Letters, the German Ernst-von-Siemens Musik-Preis, Commander in the Order of Arts and Letters from the French Ministry of Culture, etc. etc.). Carter is the most distinguished international representative of American art music. Yet he remains a thoroughly marginal figure. What are we to make of this abyss between professional recognition and popular (which usually includes critical) rage?

I should declare myself: I think that Carter's music is extraordinary. Its psychological subtlety and insight are unsurpassed; its dramatic impact often stuns; its power expands rather than contracts under repeated hearing. It is music that, far from being "intellectual" in the derogatory sense, is sensuous, in a peculiarly haunting fashion. At the same time, I think I see why this music is not understood, why it is rejected by most listeners and thought to be both pretentious and ugly. To a certain extent, of course, the controversy about Carter's music is just a part of this century's bizarre relationship between new music and old, between the composer and the audience.

Carter's family—his first audience, no doubt—was decidedly non-musical. Its lace-importing business was expected to pass to the third generation without the inconvenience of a son who preferred the weaving of musical filigree. As if to avenge the betrayal, his parents are said never to have attended a concert of his music. But Carter's musical preferences were suitable accompaniment to a familiar kind of familial opposition. His interest in early Modernism, in the avant-garde, was immediate and impassioned. This included not just the music of Scriabin and Stravinsky, but also of American composers like Ives, with whom Carter, as a teenager, often went to concerts.

Ives—whose own eclectic, aggressive, and piquant music was almost unknown outside a small circle of admirers—even served as one of Carter's references when he applied to Harvard:

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> Carter strikes me as rather an exceptional boy. He has an instinctive interest in literature and especially music that is somewhat unusual. . . . I am sure his reliability, industry, and sense of honor are what they should be—also his sense of humor which you do not ask me about.

Offended by the stultifying academic atmosphere of the Harvard music department in the 1920s, Carter majored in English literature, but spent a summer in Tunisia transcribing Arabic music; then he studied East Indian music and Balinese music, and was drawn to "experiments in what is now called mixed media." After receiving an M.A. in music from Harvard, he studied, along with nearly every other American aspirant, with Nadia Boulanger in Paris.

CARTER WAS following, in short, more or less the conventional path for a serious American composer of his time. Rejection by listeners was to be expected, if not cultivated; non-Western musics were attended to in the hopes of discovering untried, non-bourgeois techniques. The avant-garde was living up to its name, cultivating a modernist pose that was a mixture of exoticism, nationalism, and anti-bourgeois politics. By the late 1930s, however, the avant-gardist pose was discarded in favor of a more homey romance pioneered by Aaron Copland and his contemporaries. In 1939, Carter reviewed Copland's "El Salon Mexico": "He has discovered a kind of beautiful simplicity which bears a definite spiritual relationship to the simple, direct, and honest people of this continent."

At about the same time, Lincoln Kirstein asked Carter to become musical director of his touring ballet company (later to evolve into the New York City Ballet) for which Carter wrote the rarely played music of "Pocahontas." (It undoubtedly suffered by premiering on the same program as Copland's thoroughly exuberant "Billy the Kid.") Carter's two orchestral works from the early 1940s, "Holiday Overture" and the First Symphony, would shock a Carter listener today with their insouciant charm and populist aura. They are typical American works of the period, marked by cross rhythms, episodic celebrations, allusions to jazz and folk styles. If Carter's career had ended when he was in his mid-'30s, he would have been known as an intriguing epigone, neither finding the popular acclaim he obviously desired, nor satisfying the restless intellect he obviously possessed. He was a composer nurtured on the iconoclasm of the 1920s and the American populism of the 1930s, and headed nowhere in particular.

This does not mean his music of this period (or what I have heard of it) was without distinction. But Carter had not found a way to work within the dominant styles while transcending their limitations (or mannerisms). Much of the American music of the late 1930s and early '40s was "movement" music, not because of its occasional WPA populism, nor because of its easygoing graciousness, but because it always kept looking over its shoulder into the worn seats in the hall. Carter, Ruggles, Schuman, Hanson, and others wrote in the hope of making new composition in the United States something it was not: an integral part of cultural life. The style had to be accessible, dramatic, cinematic, use tonal implication and historical allusion, be suitable for such "public" occasions as the traditional concert.

THIS DREAM failed, but not because the music was unlistenable or banal or irrelevant. Its rejection indicated, rather, that taste and reputation and achievement bear a far more intricate relationship to each other than we usually expect. The failure of a style to create a tradition, or to take its place in one, is not simply to be laid at the feet of the composers or at the ears of the audience. It has much to do with the function that music plays in a culture, and the particular implications of the music actually played—with what we seek in music and what we find. It may be that this style of American music finally had no place, despite its honorable ambitions and its considerable achievement, because the public it had in mind never existed, or was contentedly occupied elsewhere.

Carter originally hoped to be "understandable to the general musical public," to write music "many people could presumably grasp and enjoy easily." But, as he told his interviewer Allen Edwards in a revealing book of conversations, "I did so without appreciation of just how serious was the audience paralysis." That paralysis—the single most important fact about musical life for most of our century—meant that new music was essentially irrelevant to a "public" even when it made that "public" the focus of its attention. By 1940 music in the concert hall had come to serve a ritualistic function founded upon the repetition of works of the 19th century. The repertory defined the public, not the public the repertory.

Carter then made a deliberate decision that many of his colleagues were to make: to write music, finally, without attending to the public at all. The European postwar avant-garde subordinated expression to technique in an obsessive, almost fetishistic attention to serial methods of composition. Carter followed the compositional way, but in a typically American fashion, emulating the eccentric stance of Ives and the inward idealism of the transcendentalists. In 1950 he withdrew into the desert to remake himself. The withdrawal was not metaphorical. Between 1950 and 1951, Carter lived in the Lower Sonoran Desert near Tucson, Arizona, where he spent time with the naturalist Joseph Krutch. "It was indeed a kind of 'magic mountain,' " Carter later wrote of that experience:

> Up to this time, I had quite consciously been trying to write for a certain audience—not that which frequented concerts of traditional music, nor that which had supported the avant-garde of the '20s (which in the '40s had come to seem elitist) but a new, more progressive and more popular audience. I had felt it was my professional and social responsibility to write interesting, direct, easily understood music.

THE DESERT encouraged him to "say to hell with the public and with the performers too. I wanted to write a work that carried out completely the various ideas I had at that time about the form of music, about texture and harmony—about everything." The result was the First String Quartet.

That quartet begins not with the presentation of themes or with a group of players bound in musical exploration, but with an isolated, impassioned, troubled solitary voice, heard in an extravagant cello cadenza. Carter meant to undo the expected sense of "quartet," just as Beethoven toyed with the manners of concerto form by beginning his "Emperor" concerto with a cadenza. The quartet's other voices then enter one by one, as if participating in some grand fugue—our tradition's most integrated and tightly knit form. Except here the counterpoint is most peculiar. Each voice enters without attending to the character of the one preceding it. There are, as David Schiff points out in his invaluable study, *The Music of Elliott Carter* (Da Capo), as many as eight distinct themes in the opening movement, each with its own shape, gesture, and speed.

There is, in fact, no sense of integration at all. We hear the four string in-

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struments, often playing in their highest, most strained registers, following distinct paths, meeting seemingly by accident. This is a more sophisticated version of Ives's familiar musical trick: imitating the sound of two bands playing different pieces as they pass each other in the town square. Carter's music is also founded on simultaneous difference, but he takes this difference seriously. The lines are nearly expressionistic, articulating distinctively private sentiments. Their meeting results in intricate conflicts in which character and personality count as much as musical form. Conversation in the First Quartet is not classical conversation—not discourse on a theme—but analytic discussion and personal attack, with fragments of material examined by members of the group, until, in the last section of the work, there is a vast, troubled communion.

These descriptive metaphors of community and conversation and character are necessary. Here is how Carter put it:

> These works [the Cello Sonata and the First Quartet] . . . depend on a special dimension of time, that of 'multiple perspective,' in which various contrasting characters are presented simultaneously—as was occasionally done in opera, for example, in the ballroom scene in *Don Giovanni*, or in the finale of *Aida*.

In Mozart's operas, whose characters come from many social universes, these simultaneous differences can be deeply moving. The "knowledge" in the quartets of Mozart's operas is a transcendental one: it stands above the characters looking down at the society as a whole, and the effect of this perspective is more powerful than any individual voice. In Carter's music, the ensemble is suffused with another kind of knowledge—the awareness within each voice that it is different from the others and cannot be easily reconciled to them. The ensemble does not attempt to restore order or to resolve difference, but to reveal what is at stake in both.

The image of "drama" must be taken seriously. Nearly all Carter's music that I have heard is programmatic. The program is not impressionistic, as in Debussy; nor is it metaphysical, as it might be in Scriabin; nor is it novelistic, as in much 19th-century music. The programs are dramas—plays—about the communal life of musical personalities. Carter has said, "I regard my scores as scenarios, auditory scenarios, for performers to act with their instruments, dramatizing the players as individuals and participants in the ensemble." The performance is literally an enactment, the players playing themselves, the listener following their every move, the intricacy of their mercurial relations played out in a miniature society.

Schiff points out that in the Second String Quartet each instrument is associated with particular musical intervals, with particular rhythmic patterns, with particular expressive characters. The first violin speaks with free rhythmic patter and a "bravura" character; it is, in Carter's words, "fantastic, ornate, mercurial." The second violin is subject to a regular pulse and displays a "laconic, orderly character which is sometimes humorous." The viola exploits rubato for its "expressive" voice. And the cello speeds up and slows down, embodying an "impetuous" spirit. Carter asked that the players of this 1959 composition be seated far apart "like characters in a Beckett play"; he saw these characters as archetypes, as musical figures come in search of an order. The riveting Double Concerto for Piano and Harpsichord (1961) escalates the scale and the risk. The public form of the concerto becomes the arena for cosmographical confrontation (Carter mentioned Pope's *Dunciad* as inspiration). The irony of the emotionally charged music is unsettling and, at times, horrifying.

This music can be heard purely musi-

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cally. Schiff shows how extraordinarily detailed is Carter's attention to shifting tempi, to voices, to chords, to structure, and how concerned he is with our experience of time. I don't fully understand the structure of these works. Nor have I technically analyzed them with great care. But I have never felt a need to labor at this sort of an understanding or at Carter's specialized (and unique) treatment of intervals and chords, because the effect of the music is very clear, viscerally clear.

INDEED, Carter criticizes those composers whose pursuit of esoteric structures and systems guarantees their music permanent unintelligibility. He may have begun his First String Quartet by saying "to hell with" the listeners and the players, but his later comments show constant attention to the "intelligent listener." "As I see it," he told Edwards, "there is in every case first of all a general desire for communication and only secondly a desire for what I call 'making musical sense.'" The execution must reveal, not conceal; it must speak to the ear as well as the mind. In Beethoven's music, as Carter points out, untrained ears may not always be aware of the central harmonic modulations. But such crucial moments in his works are marked by dynamic, melodic, or dramatic events as well: they are made into turning points in our experience of the work.

Of course, Carter does not use tonal harmony to construct his dramas, which adds to their public difficulty. We are not swayed by familiar harmonic tensions and resolutions. Nor are we carried along by melodic lines. The musical lines are more gestures than phrases, like motions with the hand or mannerisms of speech, controlled with infinite shades of nuance. If we listen to this music expecting a sort of vertical sense of harmony, we will be listening in vain. If we listen horizontally, for themes and variations, and do not hear how musical space is populated with a multiplicity of lines and gestures, we will also be listening in vain. If we listen for a pulse or a tempo that governs the spirit of a movement, and fail to attend to the manipulation of tempo within each voice, we will hear only chaos.

To listen to this music, then, we must begin by suspending our traditional habits of listening. We must attend to the instrumental voices as if they were individuals existing apart from the work. The work does not use voices; it is made of voices. It is an occasion for their meeting. If, in a Beethoven string quartet, the second violin were treated as a distinct individual with different character and affect and intention from the viola, the music would be completely destroyed. In a Carter quartet, the situation is just the opposite. This requires a certain kind of attention from the players as well. Charles Rosen has written about the extraordinary difficulties of playing Carter's music, of the task of respecting the lines as separate, of resisting the long-trained urge to play "together." The unity of the composition comes when each player is true to his own voice.

Often the works begin with nothing apparently clear, with a sort of primordial chaos or rage. After many listenings, the music's gestures become more intelligible; what first seemed glaringly disjointed unfolds through a form of energetic contemplation. There are surprising moments in which we suddenly find ourselves making sense of what came before. Carter speaks of such moments as "epiphanies" in which the participant in musical events comes to recognize their significance. One voice might begin deliberately to absorb the manners and gestures of another, or a sudden pause might interrupt a movement, allowing tensions to unravel into silence.

THIS MUSIC, then, is about character and community and the strenuous effort to reconcile them. There is something in Carter's music that is almost classically tragic. Destiny inexorably works itself out even as voices act as if they were completely free and unrelated. There is a risk, in this, of total immersion in isolated individual voices, of an introversion so complete that all else is excluded. In recent years Carter has begun to focus more and more on that internal, solitary world—the world of a single voice and its nuances—without falling prey to that risk. Something grandly introspective emerges, for example, in "Night Fantasies" (1980).

"Night Fantasies" was Carter's first solo piano work in 35 years, an intricate, virtuosic piece that uses enormously complex gestures to evoke equally complex shifting and conflicting states of mind. In a preface to the score Carter mentions "the fleeting thoughts and feelings that pass through the mind during a period of wakefulness at night." The work is an image of an insomniac's meditations, mental life at the border of sleep and wakefulness.

When I first heard it in concert six years ago (it is now available on strikingly different and effective records by Charles Rosen and Paul Jacobs) its manic intensity was haunting. On first hearing, as usual, the work seemed impossible to grab hold of; it kept proceeding, slipping away, the ears held by its insistence, but without fully grasping its sense. After many hearings, the intensity remains, along with the mystery. Carter called the work a "sort of contemporary 'Kreisleriana'" and invoked, in evocation and explanation, the poetry of Mallarmé and Lowell along with the music of Schumann. It shares with their works a sense of uneasiness and loss. Something sensuously disturbing is repeatedly come upon through incessant reflection. The passagework is eerily precise in its portrait of imprecision, giving moods and sentiments a tactile presence.

THIS IS A radical movement inward, for Carter: the creation of a musical universe out of a divided single voice, rather than out of a society divided by single voices. The path from the First Symphony to the Second String Quartet to "Night Fantasies" is a movement inward. The public, at first both courted and rejecting, becomes a challenge to the individual voice, and finally becomes irrelevant to it. The articulation of mental life becomes central. This is what links Carter, however indirectly, to the great tradition of our art music. In the 19th century, the voice of the individual was heard in dreaming and demanding melody, seeking a home in those grand architectural, public, tonal spaces. In Carter's work, the individualistic spirit of 19th century melody remains, but it is given a different meaning. His "melody"—whether heard as voices in a quartet, or in the exquisite passagework of "Night Fantasies"—is not a public display of representative sensibility, but a dramatization of its private inward character. It proclaims neither a transcendental solitude, nor, as in the late Romantics, a final communion.

I have heard a tape of Carter's new oboe concerto, which is just receiving its United States premiere with Heinz Holliger. It is an astonishing transformation of the Romantic concerto. Unlike Carter's Piano Concerto and Double Concerto, this work deliberately exploits the meaning of the concerto form and its heroic framing of the soloists voice. The oboe here is plangent,

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Religion and the Life of the Intellect

In many intellectual circles the myth still circulates that religion is the preserve of the dim-witted and unlettered. Yet, recently *The New York Times Magazine* carried an article on the "return to religion" among intellectuals. From Harvard to Berkeley, and amid inquisitive people generally, there's an undeniable renewal of interest in the questions traditional religion raises and seeks to answer. This fascination is largely a result of the failures of secular substitutes for religion (such as rationalism, narcissism, technological utopianism, aestheticism, and extremist political ideologies) to give abidingly satisfying answers to the truly significant puzzles in life: goodness, suffering, love, death, and the meaning of it all.

By no means, however, does this religious renaissance entail embracing the ersatz gods of dog-eat-dog individualism, consumerism, or superpatriotism. Nor does it imply a retreat from working for peace, justice, or human dignity. Rather, there's an awareness that, as Jean Bethke Elshtain put it, religious commitment "can help further social reform," and that religion can supply the ethical bedrock upon which to make political choices which are far more durable than those based on passing ideologies and enthusiasms. Nor does the new openness to religion signify a hostility to science, but rather an appreciation of the limits of science and technology.

The New York Times Magazine article discussed the NEW OXFORD REVIEW as part of this return to religion, and rightly so. We at the NEW OXFORD REVIEW are spearheading today's intellectual engagement with what Daniel Bell terms "the sacred." We are particularly interested in exploring religious commitments that yield humane social consequences, as exemplified by such giants as St. Francis, Gandhi, Bonhoeffer, Barth, Tawney, Schumacher, Mounier, Dorothy Day, Archbishop Tutu, Lech Walesa, Martin Luther King Jr., and Archbishop Romero. And we probe the literary and philosophical riches offered by such greats as Kierkegaard, Tolstoy, Buber, Auden, Eliot, Silone, Maritain, Waugh, Merton, C.S. Lewis, Simone Weil, Flannery O'Connor, and Graham Greene.

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ethereal, skittish. But instead of public display it seems to be turned inward, in determined introspection, dramatizing every nuance of its ruminations. Despite the orchestra, the piece seems peculiarly private; and when it comes to an end it has earned its silence, having exercised the powers of introspection for healing and solace.

Those powers have been used by Carter throughout his career. Perhaps that is why he has been dismissed as "intellectual." But a good composer is always intellectual, even when his music is not. Carter is difficult because his music celebrates the powers of mind. Nobody will be humming Carter's melodies because his melodies are the melodies of our unstructured internal life, the gestures and exclamations that are at the edge of our speech.

Carter has said that the greatest Western compositions "were not things easily or cheaply produced, but were the results of human beliefs, of commonly shared moral and aesthetic values, of orderly, logical thought and of the practical musical experiences of generations." His own music marks the passing of this common sharing, of orderly logic and of practical musical experience, and all their social counterparts. But it asserts something else: that what he once called a "profound faith in ordered processes of musical thought and expression" could still thrive; that even if such a faith cannot be the foundation of a thriving public art, it could still have much sway over the inner life, over the private territories in which thought lies at the verge of sound, and over the small societies that barely bind these territories into union.

The soul returns to the sickbed.

MODERN DYING

BY MICHAEL IGNATIEFF

NIETZSCHE, in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, imagined a future race of beings who had abandoned the pursuit of happiness for the pursuit of health. He called these diminished denizens of the future "the last men," and he said of them that "they have their little pleasure by day and their little pleasure for the night: but they respect health." He could see them jogging toward him: bright faced creatures in their tracksuits, hearts beating, lungs dilating, heads brimming with the music on their Walkmen. These last men and women would convert sex into recreation; the asceticism of religion into the asceticism of athletics; the regimens of introspection into the power of positive thinking; the human good—in all its tragic complexity—into the glow of physical well-being.

The gyms, squash courts, Nautilus rooms, swimming lanes, and saunas of the big cities resound with the thud and the grunt of the last men and women in pursuit of their grail. When polled, Americans commonly list health at the top of their preoccupations, ahead of love, work, or money, and identify good health ahead of any other alternative, including love, as the chief source of happiness. Health is a dawn to dusk regimen, with plenty of bedside reading. Books on health have displaced books on philosophy as sources of edification. In North American bookstores, *Zarathustra* nestles between *Smart Cookies Don't Crumble* and *You Can't Afford the Luxury of a Negative Thought*.

As Nietzsche argued, the ideology of health reduces Western ideals of self-knowledge and self-mastery to a regime of diet and exercise. Popular medicine is now the oracle of Nietzsche's last men. The American self-help tradition of Horatio Alger, Mary Baker Eddy, and Norman Vincent Peale now talks the language of immunology, biofeedback, and stress management. Yet the medicalization of American individualism has made it only more evident that pursuing the American dream is a punishing marathon.

If the health books are anything to go by, the race is nearly as hard on the winners as it is on the losers. All of the new books on health warn that American striving can be lethal. In Paul Pearsall's *Superimmunity*, the "hot-runner," the competitive overachiever of the American corporate ideal, is seen as a heart attack waiting to happen. These types destroy themselves by competitive stress, and their selfishness lays waste to the family networks called in to repair their self-destruction. The killer instincts that the culture encourages in the business class are killing off the killers.

Health, much more than ethics, becomes the limiting ideology of a predatory commercial culture. Indeed, the moral virtues of "caring and sharing" are increasingly valued in American culture because they are healthy, because the immunologists say that carers and sharers' coronary statistics are impressive. Nietzsche would not have been surprised. Zarathustra's "last men" have long since drawn back from capitalism red in tooth and claw: "They have left the places where living was hard: for one needs warmth. One still loves one's neighbor and rubs oneself against him: for one needs warmth."

The latest trend in health books is popular psycho-neuro-immunology. This science studies the feedback mechanisms between psychological states of mind (stress, anxiety, fear, serenity, and so on) and the body's immune system. Research now shows that chronic stress causes the adrenal glands to pump chemical messengers into the blood stream that inhibit the immune function. Conversely, immune activity in the body may "talk back" to the brain, with hormones apparently identical to the brain's own neurotransmitters. The hormones of the immune system can affect states of mind, even bring on depression. Medical researchers now confirm what holistic healing has always preached: that patients with a strong will to live and a supportive social network are more likely to survive traumatic illnesses such as cancer than those who are fatalistic and alone.

The soul—that conceptual ghost, banished by Cartesian philosophy from the feast of Western individualism—is mak-

Michael Ignatieff's *The Russian Album* has just appeared as a Penguin paperback.

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ing a sly return by the back door of science. The new soul is to be found by the microscope in the lymphocytes and macrophages of the body's immune system and in the chemical language of communication between brain and body. Popular immunology is now preaching the cultivation of this soul, just as medieval religious texts assigned exercises for the religious soul. *Superimmunity* proposes a regimen of exercise and mental gymnastics that promises that if you "master your emotions" you can "improve your health." There is a *power immune* diet designed to reinforce the body's natural defense systems.

The elective affinity is obvious between an immunology that says that patients can cure themselves and an American cultural credo that insists that the individual is the master of his or her destiny. There is an even deeper affinity between immunology and the secularized spiritualism of North American culture, which from Christian Science to California-style biofeedback has always preached the triumph of mind over matter.

In the next century, this new discipline—psycho-neuro-immunology—may have as much impact on the way we think of the mind-body relation as psychoanalysis did in the first half of this century. Already *Newsweek* predicts that the new science will lead us to consign Cartesian dualism to the museum of discarded concepts. Yet Cartesian dualism was never just an epistemological model. It was also the vehicle of what can be called moral Prometheanism: the view that man's reason makes him the master of both human and non-human nature. The Cartesian attack on the idea of the Christian soul was an attack on the idea that there was lodged in man a unity of body and mind that was God's rather than man's servant.

When Cartesian dualism is seen in this light, predictions of its demise seem—in the light of the new immunology—premature. For the new immunology is as much the handmaiden of Promethean individualism as the Cartesian view ever was. The message modern culture is likely to take from the new immunology is exactly the one Descartes took from his model of human nature: man's will will make him master of his fate.

STILL, as Nietzsche would also have said, Prometheanism is cruel to those unequal to the task. It is especially cruel to the sick. This cruelty is evident in many of these books of medical self-help. Take, for example, *Love, Medicine and Miracles* by Bernie Siegel, which has been at the top of the *New York Times* non-fiction paperback best-seller list for four months. Siegel is a professor of surgery at Yale Medical School who believes that mobilizing a cancer patient's self-love and will to resist is just as important to the cure as early diagnosis and proper medical treatment. Siegel hugs and squeezes his patients, tells them to love themselves, believes that loving yourself is just as important to a cancer cure as prompt diagnosis and effective medical treatment.

AIDS and Its Metaphors
by Susan Sontag
(Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 96 pp., $14.95)

Hypochondria: Woeful Imaginings
by Susan Baur
(University of California Press, 252 pp., $19.95)

Stories of Sickness
by Howard Brody, M.D.
(Yale University Press, 210 pp., $27.50)

The Illness Narratives: Suffering, Healing, and the Human Condition
by Arthur Kleinman, M.D.
(Basic Books, 284 pp., $19.95)

Worried Sick: Our Troubled Quest For Wellness
by Arthur J. Barsky III, M.D.
(Little, Brown, 272 pp., $17.95)

Superimmunity: Master Your Emotions and Improve Your Health
by Paul Pearsall
(Fawcett Gold Medal, 480 pp., $4.95)

Love, Medicine and Miracles: Lessons Learned About Self-Healing from a Surgeon's Experience with Exceptional Patients
by Bernie S. Siegel, M.D.
(Harper & Row, 244 pp., $19.95)

Siegel believes that cancer is despair experienced at the cellular level. "If we ignore our despair," he writes, "the body receives a die message. If we deal with our pain and seek help, then the message is 'Living is difficult but desirable' and the immune system works to keep us alive." Thus far, the message is a perfect fit between immunology and upbeat Prometheanism. But Siegel goes on to argue not only that we get cancer when we fail to face psychic conflict, but that we get it in the organs where those conflicts are "somatized" or focused. Thus, he writes, "women who have unhappy love relationships are especially vulnerable to breast or cervical diseases." He goes on, "One patient, who had lost two husbands, had uterine cancer and [shingles] in one of her breasts. I don't think it was a coincidence that after two such losses, she developed diseases of two sex organs that would effectively keep other men away." We not only get the diseases we deserve; we get the diseases we want.

Siegel insists that he is not blaming the victim, yet he writes that a patient's guilt about his own illness is "not entirely destructive for it often leads to a more realistic sense of participation in the onset of disease." The upbeat message of Siegel's book is Promethean: you can cure yourself. The downbeat message is punitively Puritan: if treatment fails, you have nobody to blame but yourself. The cruelty of moral uplift is most evident in a conversation Siegel records having with a patient named Sara who was awaiting surgery for breast cancer and whom he found smoking in her bed on the hospital ward:

> SARA: "I suppose you're going to tell me to stop smoking."
>
> SIEGEL: "No. I'm going to tell you to love yourself. Then you'll stop."
>
> SARA: "Well, I do love myself. I just don't adore myself."

Who does? If adoration is the positive mental attitude required for a successful battle against cancer, who can possibly meet the test? Not for Siegel the health-giving virtues of irony, or the wisdom of Nietzsche's dark remark: "The time of the most contemptible man is coming, the man who can no longer despise himself."

SUSAN SONTAG'S *Illness as Metaphor* was the first to point out the accusatory side of the metaphors of empowerment that seek to enlist the patient's will to resist disease. It is largely as a result of her work that the how-to health books avoid the blame-ridden term "cancer personality" and speak more soothingly of "disease-producing lifestyles," in the hope that a change of jargon will make it seem that they are going easier on the victims. Sontag's new book on *AIDS and Its Metaphors* extends her critique of cancer metaphors to the metaphors of dread surrounding the AIDS virus. Taken together, the two essays are an exemplary demonstration of the power of intellect in the face of the lethal metaphors of fear.

As Sontag observed in her first book, instead of taking comfort in the fact that half of all cancer cases can be cured, patients are so terrified by cancer's penum-

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bra of dread that they actually refuse available remedies like chemotherapy. Likewise with AIDS. Everyone who tests HIV-positive is given to believe that they will develop full AIDS symptoms and die. But as Sontag points out, "It is simply too early to conclude, of a disease identified only seven years ago, that infection will always produce something to die from, or even that everybody who has what is defined as AIDS will die of it." In the long interregnum of our ignorance, however, those who test HIV-positive have to endure the cruel insinuations of cultural metaphor: that they are to blame, that they will die, that those to whom they have made love will die, and so on.

Metaphor, Sontag argues, is the bridge of fantasy used to close the gap between what we know and what we fear. Diseases whose cures have been found become just diseases; those we do not yet understand become metaphorical carriers of fear and loathing. AIDS makes it easier to think of all strangers as potential bearers of contagion. The intimate forms of solidarity among strangers (giving blood, giving the kiss of life) come under the ban of our metaphors of dread. This fits in nicely with a return to cultural and social convention.

Sontag also puts her finger on the non sequitur at the heart of popular immunology: "The hypothesis that distress can affect immunological responsiveness and in some circumstances lower immunity to disease is hardly the same as, or constitutes evidence for—the view that emotions *cause* disease, much less for the belief that specific emotions can produce specific diseases." She argues that doctors, patients, and those who care for the sick should fight free of all the metaphors that present illness as a harbinger of death or as a proof of culpability. We should try, she writes, "to regard cancer as if it were just a disease, a very serious one, but just a disease. Not a curse, not a punishment, not an embarrassment. Without 'meaning.' And not necessarily a death sentence."

This is a project one can only admire, especially when it is proposed by a writer who happens to have survived cancer herself. But what does it mean? I think that Sontag wants patients to try to live through their illnesses with an attitude of intransigent individualism: shutting their ears to the metaphors of dread that hover about any life-threatening illness and refusing to succumb to the contagion of fear that always sweeps through those who are at their bedside.

Living without metaphor also means trusting the doctor, because only medicine approaches disease non-metaphorically. Sontag's advice is: "Get the doctors to tell you the truth; be an informed, active patient; find yourself good treatment, because good treatment does exist (amid widespread ineptitude)." Believing as she does that illness is best encountered as disease, Sontag is caustic about the trendy disparagement of disease-specific therapies and the preference for whole-body or holistic remedies. "Subjecting an emaciated body to the purification of a macrobiotic diet is about as helpful in treating AIDS as having oneself bled, the 'holistic' medical treatment of choice in the era of [John] Donne."

GIVEN THE strength of the fashion for holistic and alternative therapies, it takes resolution to defend classical medicine. But Sontag ought to have said more, in both of her essays, about the metaphors that govern our encounter with doctors. These metaphors not only include the equation medicine = science = truth, but the atavistic equation of doctor with magician, shaman, and miracle worker. Both Arthur Kleinman's and Arthur Barsky's work make it plain what a prison these metaphors have become for doctors and patients alike. It is difficult to get the truth out of doctors, as Sontag wishes us to do. The metaphors of medical omnipotence leave the doctor no room to confess error, and can reduce even articulate patients to awed silence.

These metaphors also encourage a ridiculous overmedicalization of human sorrows and ills. Susan Baur's study of the epidemic of hypochondria in American life indicates that Americans spend $247 billion on health care, nearly ten percent of the gross national product. Barsky's excellent polemic on the same subject shows, for example, that over one-third of the patients consulting doctors in general medical practice have no serious medical disorder. Hypochondria is indicative of modern individualism's persistent difficulty with reconciling itself to Fate, of its insistence that all dysfunction is a curable condition. As Baur points out, we present modern doctors with a range of minor disorders that premodern man would not have even considered illness, and we expect cures where no cure is either known or possible. The placebo effect—the fact that a

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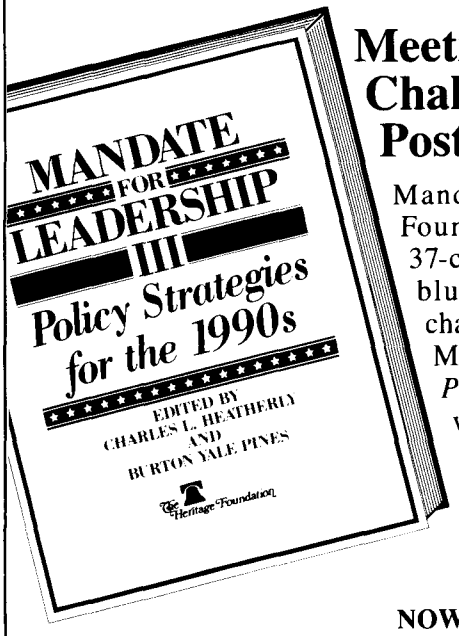
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sympathetic hearing from a doctor will often cure us of our hypochondria—is a sign of our body's unconscious prostration before the metaphors of medical omnipotence. Yet the more we define depression, sorrow, and pain as treatable conditions, the more insatiable we become for cures, the less reconciled we are to the instances when doctors cannot help us. As both Barsky and Kleinman argue, what Americans need is a little bit of irony, a capacity to see that they are making themselves ill with the frantic pursuit of health.

FURTHERMORE, the metaphors that guide physicians' understanding of their art impede their own effectiveness as healers. As Kleinman shows in his brilliant and subtle criticism of modern medical education and practice, doctors are encouraged to think of patients as defective machines, and to think of illness as a malfunction of defective parts. Instead, both he and Howard Brody wish us to think of illness as a drama in the narrative of a life. Patients, for example, who come in complaining of back pain are only likely to respond to treatment when a doctor understands their symptoms as a protest at the burdens they feel are weighing them down. Kleinman believes that the whole patient will only be healed when the medical history a doctor takes down becomes nothing less than a life history. What classical biomedicine may understand only as a heart attack should be traced back into a life narrative: to tension at work, marital distress, and/or a death in the family. Medicine will fail if it attacks only the disease and fails to treat the illness.

Kleinman's ideal of doctoring is humane, but it is also aggrandizing. On his model, good doctors should by psychotherapists, marriage counselors, grief therapists, and family confidantes, or they should be prepared to refer patients to these specialists. Once their ambit is extended from disease to illness as a whole, there is no obvious limit to what they can advise or command patients to do. Patients reading Kleinman may wonder where, if anywhere, a doctor's authority stops. And doctors may wonder whether he is not asking them to take on more than any human can bear. Kleinman's bitingly effective critique of biomedical power ends up asking for still more.

Yet attempts to limit biomedical power through the law have not been successful. As a result of the spread of the doctrine of informed consent and the emergence of malpractice law, the doctor has lost much of the metaphorical ethos of father and shaman, and patients have ceased to see themselves as awed children. The two sides of the illness relationship now confront each other, at least in theory, as judicial equals. The benefits of this revolution are obvious, but so are its drawbacks: the empowerment of the patient has been set against the legalization of what was once a relationship of trust. Kleinman's book makes it clear that the emergence of defensive medicine—doctoring whose first concern is to avoid litigation—has undermined the mutual confidence necessary for therapeutic dialogue. Judicial empowerment of the patient and his therapeutic empowerment are sometimes in contradiction.

There seems no way out of this culde-sac through the law. The problem is indeed as Sontag describes it: how to build a relation between doctor and patient in which real individuals can exchange understandings, rather than enact the metaphorical roles of father and child. Crucial to this relation is a shared appreciation of the limited purchase of medicine upon fate, a shared stoicism in which the doctor and patient share an

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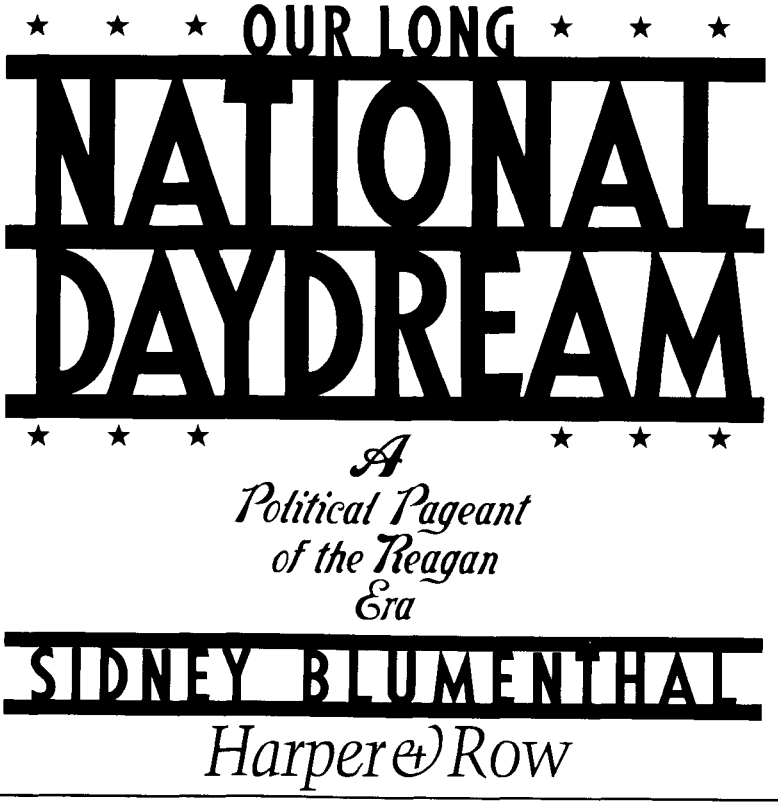

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understanding of what medicine can and cannot do. In such a realm of understanding, it would be easier for both doctors and patients to admit the limits of their knowledge and face the consequences as partners, rather than as antagonists.

STOICISM, not surprisingly, is an ideal in retreat in the modern world. Until the advent of Pasteurian medicine in the late 19th century, stoicism enjoyed a certain prestige: all too often there was no alternative to its virtues of silent and heroic endurance. But now that so much illness has been conquered, stoic acceptance of biological fate is equated with fatalism and passivity. The "last men" of modernity have jettisoned a culture of endurance for a culture of complaint. But the stoic tradition always addressed itself to the question a culture of complaint cannot answer: When should I struggle, and when must I give in?

Is it helpful or dangerous for a patient to think of his encounter with disease as "a battle," as a "struggle"? Sontag is caustic about military metaphor, in the war against AIDS or the battle against cancer. She argues that military metaphor, when used to mobilize money and resources on a society-wide scale, personalizes and demonizes disease and diffuses panic instead of knowledge. This is the metaphor used in presidential speeches or American Cancer Society press releases. But what about the ordinary patient? Should he think of his experience as a fight? A fight to get well, or if that is impossible, a fight to maintain self-respect?

All moral behavior proceeds by metaphor. Some of it is pernicious, some of it is useful. How do we tell which is which? Consider the characteristic anxiety of an Alzheimer's patient. Fifty times an hour they ask the same question; 15 times an hour they go in and out of the bathroom. Understanding their behavior not as symptoms, but as strategies of struggle, helps those who care for them to treat these people as burdened adults, rather than as incontinent children. It would be so much easier for them to give up; faced with radical loss of memory, it would be rational for them to stop asking questions, and to abandon the problem of going to the bathroom to a catheter or to a nurse. Still, though the strategy of abandonment may be rational, it is not the one patients I know happen to choose. They go in and out of the bathroom because they know that incontinence is a degrading loss of personal control. Since they cannot remember when they last went to the bathroom, and since their control of bodily functions is uncertain, it makes sense for them to act "as if" they need to go to the bathroom. In these ways, they can carry on "as if" they were still the persons they wish to be.

To understand what they are doing in this way is thus to see them as struggling to maintain a pattern appropriate to a responsible agent. The question that Sontag forces one to ask is whether this imagery of the struggle is a metaphorical self-deception on the part of an empathetic spectator. Perhaps the reality is harsher. As their memory loses its capacity to correct and to restrain, the patient becomes less of an agent and more a creature of habits, more enslaved to automatic reactions, until all the attributes of agency are lost. The biology of tissue generation determines not merely the course of the disease, but the form and the content of a patient's apparent attempts to deal with it. In a vision of disease "without meaning," struggle is strictly beside the point.

MOREOVER, the moral approval that we vest in the idea of struggle may burden the suffering patient with expectations beyond his forces. As soon as we understand a patient's experience as a struggle, we can evaluate whether he is struggling hard enough, and we can begin to treat him as if we were coaches of some exhausted runner, shouting encouragements that ignore his diminishing resources. The immunological studies that show that those who struggle survive major illness better than those who don't vest struggle with survival value, and increase the temptation of a spectator to urge them to forms of struggle beyond their strength.

Hortative solidarity at the bedside is not always respectful of the immense solitude of the ill. Illness takes them into a foreign country: as such it tests the already limited ability of humans to put themselves in each other's skin, to empathize with them through shared memories of the same condition. To urge a cancer patient to struggle, to "win," when we do not know what the pain means to them is rarely authentic and, because the patient knows we cannot know, rarely convincing.

In thinking about the metaphor of struggle, we arrive at a paradox. It is good, I think, to wish to empower a patient, to conceive of him as struggling, as being in some degree responsible for his approach to the experience of illness. The studies even show that struggling may improve the chances of survival. But it is not good to use metaphors of empowerment to create expectations that add our rack of moral achievement to his rack of physical pain.

All this helps us to understand that the language of responsibility, so central to our idea of personhood, is itself a moral metaphor. It applies to the density of determination that impinges on our every act an ideal of a sovereign self who triumphs—through understanding, through courage, through virtue—over that most demanding of our fates, the experience of serious illness. The philosophers may dispute how free our wills actually are. But there is little doubt that we need the metaphor. It is a need to be adequate to our fate, that we not be found wanting.

WHY WE have this need, I think, is largely a matter of the history of religion, the metaphorical images of man that we have inherited. These are now secularized in a modern language of agency that fits with the demands of an economic system and with a social system that rewards extreme exercises of self-reliance. But the demands of the metaphor of self-mastery are cruel. We should not think badly of a person who despairs under the weight of illness, who feels terror and horror at their own disintegration. It is easier to respect stoic courage than it is to respect shivering terror; but the bedside spectator must respect both.

The austere demands expressed in the language of responsibility and free will—encapsulated in the phrase "the will to live"—also teach us that the modern world, for very good reasons, does not have a vernacular of fate. Cultures that live by the values of self-realization and self-mastery are not especially good at dying, at submitting to those experiences where freedom ends and biological fate begins. Why should they be? Their strong side is Promethean ambition: the defiance and transcendence of fate, material, and social limit. Their weak side is submitting to the inevitable.

To ask of modern people that they be reconciled to death with the equanimity of premodern peasants is to ask them to live without the psychic drives that have propelled us beyond premodernity forever. We do not die like peasants because we do not live like them, or think like them; and a good thing, too. The modern problem is not the problem of dying

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without religious consolation. The problem is that dying after illness can make the whole narrative of selfhood appear senseless. One can accept, as Sontag wishes us to do, that death is our natural fate, most honestly endured without any metaphysical consolation, and still feel in the grip of the metaphor of injustice, of the conviction that death is unfair because it has arrived before we have brought any order to the story of our life.

Yet if death is natural, if it is "without meaning," why should justice have anything to do with it? Being run over on the street, a young man of 41, with two kids, half a novel finished, and a whole life to live, may be a misfortune, but it is not an injustice. The persistence of this absurd belief in the injustice of death, among those who no longer believe in a divine lawgiver, must be attributed to the persistent vitality of the metaphor that leads us to regard our life as a narrative that we compose as we go along, with a beginning, a middle, and an end. This is a metaphor that convinces us that we are the makers of our lives, when, in fact, chance and contingency and the dull determination of living all combine to push our lives into sequences we neither desire nor intend. To accept death is to accept much more than that we do not write the end of the story; it is also to appreciate that we don't write much of the beginning or the middle either.

LIVING ONE'S illness without meaning and facing one's death without meaning requires us, therefore, to live ironically in relation to the Western metaphors of selfhood and its ideals of responsibility and self-mastery. We need to learn an ethic of ironical struggle, one that appreciates that we go into the battle against illness as underdogs. Is this a counsel of despair? I do not think so. It is a counsel of solidarity with the human fate.

We have a model. Michel de Montaigne, afflicted with kidney stone, without any of the remedies of modern medicine, wrote in the 1580s at the end of his life: "You do not die of being sick, you die of being alive." He welcomed his affliction: "It is for my own good that I have the stone, it tells me that buildings of my age must naturally suffer some leakage, that it is time for them to begin to grow loose and give way." Montaigne's cheerful equanimity shows that resignation and the mastery of the self are not at odds. He took illness as his teacher, and in becoming its student, he became its master. □

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A Volcanic Flash

"Never Despair": Winston S. Churchill, 1945-1965 by Martin Gilbert

(Houghton Mifflin, 1,456 pp., $40)

The opening sentence of this eighth and final volume of the official biography of Winston Churchill finds him sleeping late on the morning after the surrender of Germany. He was 70. Within two months the British people would throw him out of office; but any fear that the rest of his life will be an anti-climax is at once dispelled. He awoke that day to news of the capture of Rangoon, "the splendid close of the Burma campaign," he telegraphed to Mountbatten; the struggle against Japan must continue. He lunched in bed, his most favored desk. To Truman he telegraphed that it was his intention "to adhere to our interpretation of the Yalta Agreements." Tito's forces had already marched into the Italian province of Venezia Giulia, one of the territories at issue at Yalta, and entered the Austrian province of Carpathia. Communism, established by force of arms in Eastern Europe, was trying to push to the West. On that first day of "peace" in Europe, Churchill telegraphed Tito, warning him that if he attacked the allied forces in Venezia Giulia, the British commander "has already the fullest authority to reply." (Eleven days later, under Churchill's pressure, Tito's forces withdrew.) But the most ominous news was that 15 Polish leaders, all approved by Britain as possible members of a provisional Polish government, had been seized by the Soviet authorities and taken to Moscow as prisoners. In the hour of victory, the cold war was begun . . . by the Soviet Union.

There, at its very beginning, is the frame of this volume, and the justification of its length. Some have criticized the method of Martin Gilbert's work. It is true that Gilbert has not provided an interpretative biography, nor drawn on the multitude of other sources that are available; he has left that more congenial task to later historians. But I think that Gilbert has been, in his way, correct. He has stuck to the thankless task of furnishing a documentary record, overwhelmingly from Churchill's own papers and those of his immediate circle, of the life, decisions, actions, concerns, and style of a statesman who was at the center of affairs from his election to Parliament in 1900 almost until his death. The modesty of Gilbert's method is appropriate to the magnitude of his subject.

Churchill's activity was so unceasing, his interests so far-ranging, his knowledge of men and affairs so comprehensive, his understanding so profound, his political sense so realistic *and* so visionary, his influence so large and beneficent and needed, his humanity so various, that it was first necessary that a conscientious historian should labor in the vineyards to give some structure to this life as it was lived. This Gilbert has splendidly done. Perhaps the attention span of some reviewers has been shriveled by television. Personally I would reduce the new volume by only a dozen pages or so (there are sometimes too copious extracts from the less important speeches). Otherwise there is good advice to the reader in the title: never despair.

In these pages we contemplate the last 20 years of the life of an old man. In 1953, when Churchill was 77, and again prime minister, he suffered the most recent of three arterial spasms or minor strokes, and there were warnings of the major stroke to come. His doctor, Lord Moran, and his private secretary, Jack Colville, a man of superior intelligence and character, went to Lord Salisbury, the elder statesman of the Conservative Party, who suggested that Churchill should be persuaded (that is, forced) to repair to the House of Lords, while nominally remaining prime minister. Even Salisbury knew the idea was foolish: "I am afraid he regards us in the Lords as a rather disreputable collection of old gentlemen." (Offered a dukedom by two sovereigns, Churchill never accepted a peerage.) And who would be the unfortunate wretch who would tell Churchill that he was to be put out to lordly pasture?

But they had misjudged him. Churchill had immediately to meet a dangerous motion of censure in the Commons; and to the amazement of all the moaners and the nail-biters, he whipped the opposition in his speech, ran it yelping from the field. Nigel Nicolson, a backbencher at the time, wrote to his father of the occasion, "He is looking white and fatty, a most unhealthy look, you would say, if he were anyone else, but somehow out of this sickly mountain comes a volcanic flash." That nicely captures the moving and elevating story that this volume tells.

Gilbert devotes his first 650 pages to the years in opposition, from 1945 to 1951. This may seem excessive. Yet he enables us to see for the first time Churchill's sustained and often electrifying energy and inspiration out of office. We are jolted, almost at once after the defeat of Germany, even though we know it will happen, by his defeat in the 1945 general election. The votes were not counted for three weeks, so that the ballots of the men and women on active service around the world could be flown home. I remember many foreign journalists, including Americans, saying that in their own countries no one would have believed that the ballot boxes could be kept for three weeks without tampering by the government. In the interval Churchill flew to the opening of the Potsdam Conference. There, on the night before he returned home for the counting of the votes, he had an "unpleasant dream. . . . I dreamed that life was over. I saw—it was very vivid—my dead body under a white sheet on a table in an empty room. I recognized my bare feet projecting from under the sheet. It was very lifelike. . . . Perhaps this is the end." Two days later, even before they had finished counting the votes, he submitted his resignation to the king.

Was life over? In the Commons and in public he was gracious and magnanimous beyond even what we expected from him. But only from Gilbert's record do we now see how deeply, and for how long, Churchill felt the wound. It was only painfully that he overcame his "vain repinings." Above all, perhaps, he was dejected because he had not been entrusted with the conduct of affairs when, as he told a reunion of veterans of Alamein in 1950, "destiny compels us after all our victories, to face new, strange, gathering dangers." But it was precisely this sense of the danger that drew him out of his despondency and galvanized him into action.

Wishing to warn and to advise, Churchill was greedy for information, especially about Soviet military strength (as the British and Americans were rapidly demobilizing), and about Russia's political intentions. He reached to an extraor-

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dinary range of contacts abroad, as he had done before the war to estimate Germany's strength and Hitler's intentions. In the Commons he pummeled the Labour government with the facts that this "private citizen" had collected. He also passed on some confidentially to Clement Attlee, who had succeeded him as prime minister, and regularly communicated his all-too-accurate forebodings to Truman.

Churchill first met Truman at Potsdam. He liked him "immensely," he told his daughter Mary, and found him "a man of exceptional character and ability, with ... simple and direct methods of speech, and a great deal of self-confidence and resolution." Out of office, Churchill built on this relationship, and in March 1946 the president of the United States escorted him to Fulton, Missouri, where Churchill delivered the speech that defined the nature of the Soviet threat and introduced the Iron Curtain.

GILBERT'S METHOD draws our attention to the pertinacity of such personal relationships. On the day after the German surrender, Churchill found the time to telegraph to three former French prime ministers, to Léon Blum, Edouard Daladier, and Paul Reynaud, his congratulations on their liberation. No one would have blamed him if he had held at least the last two partly responsible for France's collapse in 1940. And later that year he sprang to the defense of a fourth, Pierre-Etienne Flandin, who was being tried for treason for collaborating with the Vichy government in its early days. The court was stirred when Churchill's letter was read; the serious charges were dropped, and Flandin was released from custody.

These four French names provide only one example of the network of contacts he maintained around the world. One of the weaknesses of the Western alliance today is that American politicians, notably those aspiring to the presidency, have few, if any, sustained relationships with politicians, soldiers, and intellectuals in other countries. They would do well to recall the extent to which Churchill was his own source of intelligence even out of office. This "greatest citizen of the world of our time," as Attlee called him after his death, was the least of Little Englanders, the least of chauvinists. He found his own way into the details of the politics of other nations.

Churchill did not despise intellectuals, as many of our contemporary conservatives affect to do. Of course intellectuals on politics can be fatuous. But Churchill knew that they also engage in an activity for which there is no alternative, that crosses all frontiers, that limns our first intimations of the future, not least in its interest to explain the past. Churchill always wanted to know where we have come from. One of his most severe critics after the war was that almost "pure" intellectual in politics, R. H. S. Crossman, the extreme left-wing product of Winchester and New College, Oxford, darting and mischievous, devious, conspiratorial, capable of standing common sense on its head, and playing pingpong (as I can vouch) with a deadly venom; yet with a value, even seriousness, to which one was stupid not to attend. It is characteristic of Churchill to find him on vacation in Marrakech in 1950 reading *The God That Failed*, the essays by six former communist intellectuals that Crossman edited. If Churchill was going to warn the world of the dangers of Soviet communism, he wished to know for himself what he called in a letter to his wife "an impressive study of Communist mentality by those who have recovered from the disease." Here was a politician who would not have worried about a question about what books he had read recently.

THE FULTON SPEECH was not popular at the time, especially in America, although Truman read it on the train to Fulton and was enthusiastic in his approval. Churchill merely told truths too bluntly. It is valuable to have Gilbert's full account of its preparation, delivery, and reception; Churchill could justly claim in a letter to Thomas Dewey in December 1946 that by then it "would be criticized as consisting of platitudes," and three days later to Frank Clarke in Florida, "Fulton holds its own."

I remember reading the speech the day after its delivery. Europe had just struggled through the first bitter postwar winter. Britain itself was tired, short of rations, dreary. The continent was shattered, exhausted, unfed, unclothed, unhoused. We dreaded each election in France or Italy, because Soviet communism, even with the tyranny, at least seemed to offer some kind of an answer. Then there came this familiar growl from a small Midwestern campus no one had ever heard of. It compelled us to look still more bleakly at the reality. And suddenly there was hope. It was

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always Churchill's genius to extract hope—even in 1940, when Hitler had the continent writhing under his heel—by staring at the harshness of reality. He would wring hope from the very brutality of the truth.

OUT OF OFFICE after the war, Churchill did what one would have thought only a government could do: he was the main founder, inspirer, guiding spirit, and ultimately the proclaimed formal leader of the United Europe Movement. It was a consuming passion. Again Gilbert's copiousness displays its worth. We find it hard to believe that an aging man could so replenish himself, and us, and Europe, and America, in a cause that was so far-reaching in its vision and its urgency. Churchill loved Europe—America—the West—Christendom (a term he was not afraid to use)—as no one else in our century has known how to love it. Within him was his whole civilization.

So, thrown out of office, he put himself into harness. He was all muscle in the cause. "Without the resurrection and reconciliation of Europe," he wrote in 1946, "there is no hope for the world." He tried to pull in allies from almost every point on the political compass. Before the vital European conference at The Hague in 1948, he wrote a six-page letter to Léon Blum to try to prevent a European socialist boycott of it. He wanted the socialists in, too. Blum, recall, an intellectual, a literary man, a Jew, a socialist, the creator of the Popular Front in France, was the enemy, one would have thought, of everything that the high-born Tory represented. Yet to Churchill, Blum was Europe.

So Churchill drilled his passion to the laborious task of forming the United Europe Movement. From Churchill's inspiration, as George C. Marshall stated when he announced the Marshall Plan, came not only that Plan, but NATO itself. Churchill's eloquence in peace matched his eloquence in war:

> President Roosevelt spoke of the Four Freedoms, but the one that matters most today is Freedom from Fear. Why should all these hard-working families be harassed, first in bygone times, by dynastic and religious quarrels, next by nationalistic ambitions, and finally by ideological fanaticism? Why should they now have to be regimented and hurled against each other by variously labeled forms of totalitarian tyranny, all fomented by wicked men, building their own predominance upon the misery and the subjugation of their fellow human beings? Why should so many millions of humble homes in Europe, aye, and much of its enlightenment and culture, sit quaking in dread of the policeman's knock?
>
> That is the question we have to answer.

We can speak too glibly of Churchill's sense of history, as if it was unearned; as if he saw some technicolor panorama of the centuries, rather like the English codfish now served up as "Masterpiece Theatre." Gilbert allows us to appreciate more fully the energy of his sense of history. Behind it was a sense of geography. He seems always to be in the Map Room. Yet he didn't really need a map to know where Carpathia was. He knew the *limes* of the Roman Empire—its wooden, manned frontiers—and knew why geographically, strategically, economically, they were drawn where they were. He had served as a young officer on the North West Frontier of India; he had been with Kitchener in the Sudan. What remained of a sense of empire in his case was an embrace of the globe. He ruled no one out.

His magnanimity to foe as well as friend is celebrated. After the First World War, as Gilbert records, a French municipality asked him to devise the wording for its war memorial. Churchill proposed the words to be set out as written:

IN WAR: RESOLUTION
IN DEFEAT: DEFIANCE
IN VICTORY: MAGNANIMITY
IN PEACE: GOODWILL

These words, as Gilbert says, "stand in the opening pages of each volume of Churchill's war memoirs, under the heading: 'Moral of the Work.'" Having defeated Germany, he was the first and the clearest, after the war, in seeking reentry of Germany into the European community. Even in Berlin in 1945 he said that "hate had died with their surrender." At the European Congress in The Hague, he proclaimed, in the spirit of Heine, that one object was to "revive the ancient fame of the German race."

I REMEMBER HOW he spoke, shortly after the end of the war, in Strasbourg. The ancient city of Strasbourg has always been a shuttlecock between Germany and France. When they go to bed at night, its citizens have rarely been sure if they will wake up the next morning German or French. In a newsreel cinema in 1945, we watched Churchill address the rapturous multitude in Strasbourg from the balcony of the Hôtel de Ville. He rose to his feet, silenced the crowd, peered over his small spectacles, and said, in a caricature of his most grave English accent, syllable by syllable, *Pre-nez-garde. Je-vais-par-ler-française.* We chortled at the cunning old dog. With a joke, Churchill had made the men and women of that city feel not French or German, but European. He was a healer, like Lincoln. Churchill, the conqueror of Germany in a war that had to be fought, as Lincoln knew the Civil War had to be fought, set out at once to bring the Germans back to us.

Out of office, Churchill threw himself also into another passion. He was, remained, and proclaimed himself to be a Zionist. Few of his attacks on the Labour government that succeeded him were more brutal, more contemptuous, than his criticism of its Palestine policy. Ernest Bevin, the great trade union lead-

DOUBLE SONNET FOR MINIMALISTS

The spiral shell
apes creamhorns of smog,
Dalmation, quenelle
or frosted hedgehog,
yet is obsessed
by a single thought
that its inner guest
is strictly taught.

When the self that grew
to follow its rule
is gone, and it's through,
vacant, fanciful,

its thought will find
Fibonacci's mind.

That fragile slug,
bloodless, unborn,
till it knows the hug
of love's tutoring form,
whose life, upstart
in deep, is to learn
to follow the art
of turn and return,

when dead, for the dense
casts up no clue
to the infinite sequence
it submitted to.

May its bright ghost reach
the right heart's beach.

MONA VAN DUYN

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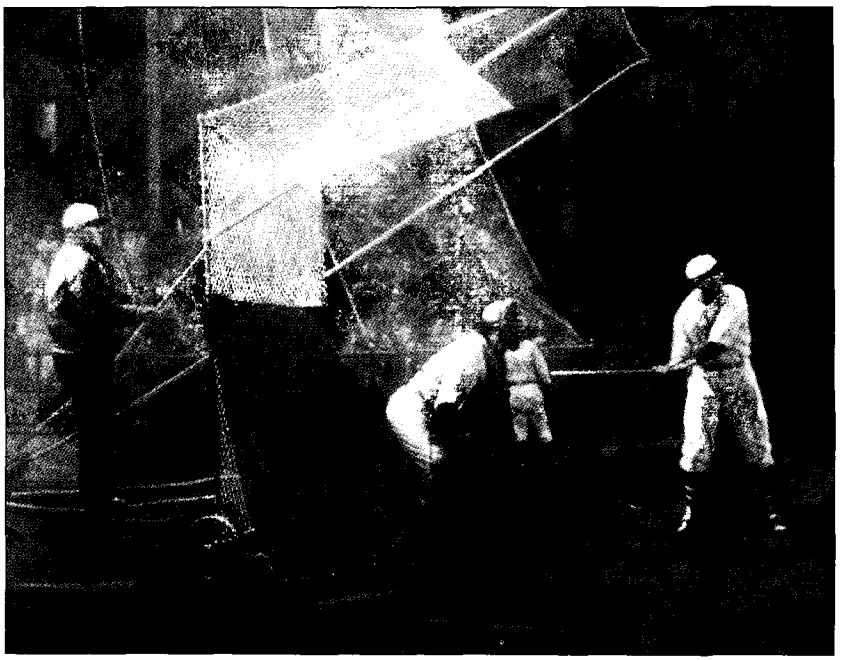
er brought forward by Churchill during the war as secretary of labor, and then dramatically made foreign secretary by Attlee (one of Attlee's soundest judgments)—a man who had fought communism all his life in the unions was unlikely to back down before the Soviet menace—was unquestionably pro-Arab, even anti-Semitic. Churchill, with all his admiration for Bevin, made Bevin look like the scoundrel he was over Palestine, which was, in Churchill's mind, the historical entity of Israel. Why? Churchill loved the rowdiness of the Jews. He welcomed members of Parliament banging the lids of their desks in the chamber; and the best desk-lid bangers in history are the Jews.

NO YEARS in opposition, of any statesman, were as creative as Churchill's. Then came his years as prime minister from 1951 to 1955. I was a young journalist at the time, an editorial writer on domestic politics for the *Times*. I watched him, I listened to him, I wrote impudently about him. Gilbert's account corrects some of my judgments, but reassures me that I was not entirely wrong. Yes, there were the declining powers, of which one was well aware; but also there were the volcanic thrusts.

Consider Russia. A big country. Every country in Europe has lived for centuries under the threat of Russia's push forward. It is an unceasing source of amazement to Europeans, therefore, that America has no sense of a historic Russia. Americans appear to believe that Russia was born in 1917 at the Finland Station. Churchill was aware, as Gilbert shows us, of the huge presence of Russia. He understood that Russia is permanent; and that it is almost dangerously religious. He understood also the attraction of communism, a little like the attraction of Cavafy's barbarians, who were "a kind of solution," though he opposed it bitterly. On the death of Stalin, and on the rise of Khrushchev, Churchill saw a new possibility (as he would have seen, I imagine, in Gorbachev).

The real importance of this volume is the tale it tells of Churchill's turn from the defeat of one totalitarianism to the fight with another, with new forms of aggression, and a wholly other country. The differences between these two struggles, in Churchill's mind, are striking. The most consistent and forceful opponent of appeasement before the war resisted those after the war who used "appeasement" as a shibboleth to oppose any accommodation with Russia. In 1950, in opposition, he welcomed Attlee's assurance that there would be no appeasement, but then asked that the word "be more precisely defined. . . . Appeasement in itself may be good or bad according to the circumstances." This was a man whose mind was not locked into the past. As prime minister, in advocating in 1954 a policy of "peaceful coexistence" with Russia, he warned that there is "a vast ideological gulf between the idea of peaceful coexistence vigilantly safeguarded, and the mood of forcibly extirpating the Communist fallacy and heresy."

The last years make one ache. Churchill wished only to be released from his mortal coil. He was miserable. Even at the time, one thought of a more or less lifeless whale beached on his overlong, no longer fruitful, life. Gilbert refers a lot to Alan Hodge, the young man who helped Churchill with his remarkable *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples* (notice the plural). Hodge was one of my liveliest companions in London. The old man, Hodge related, liked to watch old movies in a private cinema. Like all old men, he nodded off in the middle of it. And like all old men, he would wake up with a start, and say to young Hodge, "Tell me which are the baddies and



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which are the goodies, and then I can work out the rest for myself." Which, of course, was more or less what he did with Hitler and Stalin.

Hodge told me of a wonderfully haunting moment. Churchill did not like to be alone, though he felt alone. Once he summoned Hodge to be with him in one of the houses lent to him by rich friends in the south of France. In the chill evening, Churchill stared into the fireplace. The pine logs were spitting and hissing as they burned. Then the familiar voice growled: "I know why logs spit. I know what it is to be consumed."

WHAT GAVE this man his embrace? Nothing is more important in Gilbert's last volume than the disclosure, even though we knew it vaguely before, of Churchill's unbelievable lack of nastiness. He could not be mean for more than a minute. This odd giant never stopped seeing others as mattering as himself. He may well, in the hurly-burly of great affairs, have driven his colleagues to distraction. He had things to do, and believed, rightly, that he was the only person who could do them. But never—never—did he fail to look to the people in his private life.

The extensive letters to his wife in this volume are a resource in themselves. (So are Clementine Churchill's spirited rebuttals.) And there was his moving relationship with his youngest daughter, Mary, and her moving love of him; his anxious, caring love of his only son, Randolph; the dear love of his fraught daughters, Diana and Sarah, and their abundant reach to him. In a very special circumstance, half public, half private, Randolph Churchill once told me that the mess of most of the lives of Churchill's children, including Randolph, was not the fault of his father, Winston, but of his mother. "Our mother loved Winston Churchill so much that she had no time for her and his children. It wasn't my father's fault. No one invited us more to be part of his busy life. He always found time for us. Always."

The volume, the work, the life, end, as they must, with the funeral. For once I wish Gilbert had abandoned his severity. It is totally plausible that Churchill planned his own funeral; it was, after all, the most gorgeous display of pageantry this side of a coronation. Surely nobody but Churchill could have thought that his body should be taken by barge, like a Tudor sovereign, from a pier near to St. Paul's Cathedral to a pier near to Waterloo Station, where it would be borne by train to the Marlborough burial plot at Blenheim. In the event, however, the most heraldic feature of this departure was none of Churchill's doing. As the barge progressed down the Thames, the dockside cranes all dipped as it passed. The sight of these bowing cranes moved a nation (and me) to tears. For dockers, stevedores, are a nation's most Bolshie workers. In Britain, certainly, none of them ever could have voted for Winston Churchill. Yet they, these proud proletarians, by their own bidding, on a day off, and not on the orders of their employers, lowered their cranes like guardsmen making an arch of their swords over the passing of a monarch.

HENRY FAIRLIE

SOFT CORE

Constitutional Faith
by Sanford Levinson

(Princeton University Press, 250 pp., $19.95)

Thanks to George Bush's campaign, it may be hard for even thoughtful children to recite the Pledge of Allegiance again without at least a mild feeling of foolishness. For all the apparent urgency and self-assuredness of his confrontation with the pledge issue, moreover, Bush showed precious little interest in saying what he would have us pledge allegiance *to*. To "pledge allegiance to the flag, and to the republic for which it stands," supposes that the republic stands for something. But what? Is there one best interpretation of what America stands for? If so, what is it?

Sanford Levinson is a man of the left who takes patriotism seriously. In *Constitutional Faith*, he offers a timely meditation on exactly what, if anything, America can stand for, and on the value in general of expressing our allegiance through pledges and oaths. The book is at once a quest for a constitutional creed worth affirming, and an expression of several worries and doubts characteristic of contemporary liberalism. By staking out the American creed, will we unfairly exclude some from what is supposed to be an open community? But if America stands only for openness, does it stand for anything? Are there good reasons for affirming *any* particular conception of what America stands for, or does affirmation require something like a leap of faith?

Levinson's answer, in brief, is that America does stand for something. That something, though, is a rather insubstantial vision of openness and inclusion; a rejection of "fixity or closure"; "a process of becoming"; "a commitment to taking political conversation seriously." While he wants to affirm the value of reasonable and civilized conversation, Levinson doubts that reasoned argument yields anything more than a plurality of deeply divergent and equally plausible visions of what America stands for. And he personifies this pluralism: while his book is notable for its engaging and sometimes profound arguments, it is also remarkable for its ultimate refusal to take a side in almost any of them.

It might seem obvious, for example, that Americanism stands, at the very least, for government by consent. As Levinson points out, America has been a "covenanting community" since the Pilgrims disembarked. But he also shows that, alongside the contractarian strain, a rival tradition stresses the inadequacy (or even the impossibility) of government from choice, and the need for popular veneration and unreasoned faith. The Founders have been worshiped as an "assembly of demigods," and monuments have been established to the "miracle at Philadelphia." Calls for both reasoned choice and faith have even been exquisitely combined, as in Lincoln's recollection of the founding generation in his Lyceum address: "They were the pillars of the temple of liberty; and now that they have crumbled away, that temple must fall, unless we, their descendants, supply their places with other pillars, hewn from the solid quarry of sober reason."

Historical tradition provides no clear answer, then, to what the Constitu-

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tion means. But neither does textual interpretation of the documents themselves. Levinson points out the problems. What, for example, is to be interpreted? The written word alone, assuming we can agree on what constitutes holy scripture, or the word supplemented by a tradition of interpretation? (Levinson calls the former the "protestant" approach and the latter the "catholic" approach.) And who is to interpret? All the faithful (the "protestant" version) or a priestly elite (the "catholic" one)? To make matters more complicated, it is possible to be a "catholic" on the texts (believing, that is, that non-textual sources such as Supreme Court precedents and morality should play a role in interpretation) and a "protestant" when it comes to who may interpret (denying that the Supreme Court is the final interpreter). Or vice versa. Ronald Dworkin is a "catholic-protestant." Hugo Black was a "protestant-catholic." Edwin Meese is a "protestant-protestant."

LEVINSON'S religious metaphor is no accident. His scheme suggests that the differences between "catholics" and "protestants" in the world of the Constitution are as unsettleable as those between Protestants and Catholics in the world of religion:

> Only if there is widespread agreement on "principles and methods of correct interpretation" can a written Constitution be said to be a source of stability. Or, alternatively, only if an institution is accorded absolute supremacy in the interpretation of the creed will disorder be prevented.

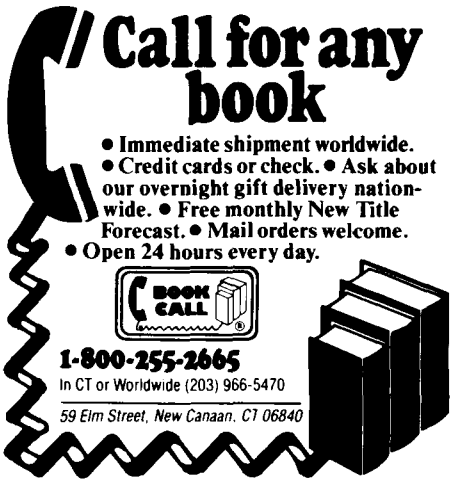
According to Levinson, however, no such agreement and no such authority is now possible. The implications are frightful:

> The "death of constitutionalism" may be the central event of our time, just as the "death of God" was that of the past century (and for the same reason). Many in our culture have neither the belief in the persuasive force of detached reason nor the ability to make a "leap of faith" upon reaching the barriers of rational assent.

This "faith" is no more possible than rational certainty. Casting the Constitution as a "civil religion" must be seen as "an almost willed attempt to maintain belief in a heritage that cannot in fact withstand a confrontation with the 'postmodernist' elements in our culture." Constitutional faith expresses a "yearning for national (and moral) community but not their reality." We cannot resist, it seems, the longing for faith and community, any more than the ineluctable return to doubt and fragmentation. And lest we be lulled into complacency by America's surface calm, Levinson reminds us that "a once-strong, indeed culturally dominant, mode of thought can collapse almost literally overnight." This is dramatic stuff, reminiscent of the still more dire predictions of apocalyptic anti-liberals like Alisdair MacIntyre.

A few glimmerings of hope remain. Levinson speaks of the Constitution as adumbrating a community of interpreters carrying forward the Framers' project in the spirit not of sycophants, but of critical, clear-eyed partners in the enterprise of reasonable self-government, as if "taking responsibility for acting as God's partner in an ongoing creation, an endless process of becoming rather than a submission to a frozen or ossified past." Here are some outlines of an admirable (and admirably liberal) conception of citizenship. Unfortunately Levinson never examines the strengths and the implications of his vision of liberal community. Just when the reader expects an exposition and defense of Levinson's particular and even partisan vision, the discussion is cut short by handwringing over the impotence of public reflection and the impossibility of rational agreement.

IS OUR situation really as hopeless as Levinson suggests? It is, as he asserts, too late in the day to maintain the availability in politics of "very evident and very certain demonstrations," too late for deductions from unassailable premises, of the kind that Descartes sought. Political arguments will often come down to difficult and debatable judgments. Still, the fact that there are hard cases does not mean that all cases, or even most cases, are impossibly hard. Nor does it mean that judgments are mere choices among "different cultural visions" requiring "a leap . . . of faith or of something else." The sustained application of critical reflection often enables us to discern better and worse arguments, to distinguish reasons from prejudices. We often *can* pick out, among a range of competing positions, one that is, on balance, best. Levinson never shows, on any given question, that competing positions are equally well (or poorly) justified. The irony here is that while Levinson heaps praise on "conversation," in practice he loses patience with arguments long before reaching the "barriers of rational assent."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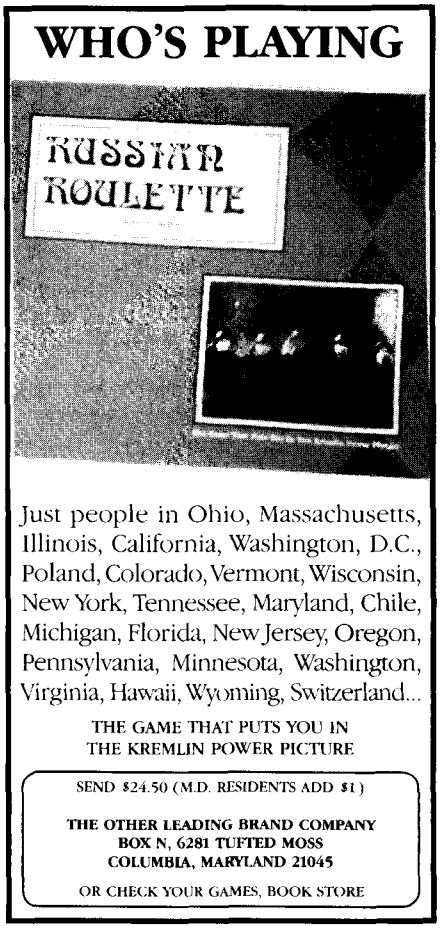
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Take the example of textual interpretation. Levinson's sympathies seem to lie with the "catholic" notion that constitutional interpretation must draw on sources outside the text. But he steadfastly refuses to summon a sustained argument in defense of that position. He does not tackle Justice Black's "protestant" insistence on the text as the only source of authority. In fact, Black's very insistence on the text is intelligible only as part of an extratextual tradition of interpretation that seeks to constrain judicial discretion. Indeed, Black's refusal "to go farther than a specific provision [could] be taken" flies in the face of the frequently broad language of the Constitution itself. The absurd consequence of Black's "textualism" is that the frequently unspecific and open-ended language of the text must be ignored. Which is why the Ninth Amendment ("The enumeration of rights in this Constitution shall not be taken to deny or disparage others retained by the people") meant exactly one thing to Justice Black: nothing.

The lack of patience with arguments manifests itself elsewhere as well. Levinson's discussion of slavery seems designed to show that any "happy correlation of [constitutional] law and morality" is naive. The original Constitution extended various protections to slavery: How could the founding document fail to be morally problematic? But Levinson never adequately addresses attempts to justify the Constitution's treatment of slavery. Lincoln's argument was that the Constitution reads as though the Framer's regarded slavery as inconsistent with the basic moral values underlying the Declaration of Independence, but "knew of no way to get rid of it at that time." The Union was not, Lincoln insisted, a compact with the devil, as the abolitionists charged:

> When the fathers of the Government cut off the source of slavery by the abolition of the slave trade, and adopted a system of restricting it from the new Territories where it had not existed, I maintain that they placed it where they understood, and all sensible men understood, it was in the course of ultimate extinction. . . .

The original Constitution could be read, then, as prescribing the minimal concessions necessary to bring Southern states into the Union, while asserting deeper principles at odds with slavery. Levinson never explains why we should reject Lincoln's attempted reconciliation of the Constitution and the principle of equality. He says only that Lincoln's position is "essentially contested," that it is a complex matter about which people disagree. Of course, the rejection of Lincoln's position is no less a controversial matter, so one wishes Levinson would make the best case he could, one way or the other. Instead, the prospect of inevitable disagreement seems enough reason to abort the conversation altogether.

LEVINSON DESCRIBES himself as "self-consciously modernist," and explains that he believes in an "ever-more-radical moral pluralism tending toward relativism." In effect, he simply asks the reader to assume with him that there are many truths (or no truth), and then explores the constitutional implications. He never *argues* to this conclusion. Nothing in this book shows that better and the worse positions cannot be discerned. The issue is of more than academic interest. The aspiration to public moral justification underlies and helps justify judicial review and other anti-populist features of our complex constitutional system. To portray that aspiration as an unrealizable yearning could help undermine some of our most ennobling political practices.

Underlying the sometimes maddening twists and turns of Levinson's narrative is a stylish agony alternately described as "postmodernist," "modernist," and "much influenced by Richard Rorty." Levinson's text is further evidence of the widespread influence of Rortian pragmatism. And so Levinson explains, quoting Rorty, "that truth is not the sort of thing one should expect to have an interesting theory about." We should forget about the nature of truth, and get on with the more urgent and practical problems that confront us.

Well and good. But if Levinson thinks we ought to forget about truth, why is he so riveted by it? He declaims that

> those of us who are classified as nihilists have drunk deeply at the well of those branches of modern thought most skeptical of concepts like truth, neutrality, or disinterestedness, insofar as these terms all retain a strong barrier between the knowing subject and the object of knowledge. . . . "Truth" may continue to be a word within modernist culture, but only as a synonym for culturally shared conventions.

Levinson can neither forget about "truth" nor resist announcing the truth of his own highly conventionalist conception of it.

IT MAY BE that the most outrageous Rortianisms are meant to be taken with a grain of salt, as a kind of rhetorical therapy. But what disease could justify such treatment? A literal belief in graspable Platonic forms? Levinson does seem to see a kind of ersatz Platonism rampant in the academy: "All professors, including those of professions, claim privileged access to genuine 'knowledge' as opposed to mere 'opinion.'" I can only say (on behalf of the home team) that sharp distinctions between genuine knowledge and mere opinion cannot be found in the theories of leading liberal philosophers like John Rawls, Ronald Dworkin, and Thomas Nagel. The best political theory, while certainly rigorous, sustained, and comprehensive, is nevertheless continuous with ordinary thought and reasoning. Most important, perhaps, the aspiration to act on the basis of good reasons is one that can be widely appreciated.

The odd thing about pragmatism is that while it seeks to elevate the standards and concerns of common, non-philosophical discourse, it fails to reflect those standards and concerns as well as the "philosophers" it attacks. Rorty consistently seems to identify good moral reasons simply with those actually enforced by a community: an assertion that many non-philosophers would find morally troubling and intuitively false.

INTENSITIES & ANALOGIES

by A.R. Thurar

The psychological reasons for everyday behaviors: Art, Drama, Love, Music, Religion, Sex, Sports & many others.

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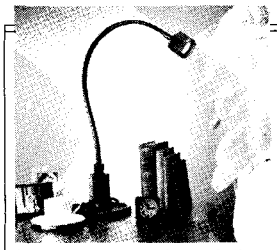

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Some form of moral absolutes may, paradoxically, be the ultimate form of pragmatism. People often suppose that by careful, critical thought we get closer to the truth without thinking that truth is anything to which we have direct or unmediated access, or that the truth is something we could ever grasp fully or surely. Such a minimal moral or scientific realism seems to me (on its face at least) a far more helpful assumption for political and moral discourse than the collapse of justification into mere consensus. The striving for objectivity, for the isolation of personal biases and the suppression of merely ideological considerations, are useful, even if they are not perfectly attainable.

Levinson rightly senses that liberal constitutionalist regimes are peculiarly committed to a process of public justification. The institution of judicial review stands for our commitment to exercise power only on the basis of reasons that can be publicly stated and presented to the losers of political contests. But Levinson's own commitment to a politics of conversation leaves him in an embarrassed position. He wants to believe in criticism, but not in truth. He wants to encourage a critically reflective and questioning citizenry, and to deny that there can be any real payoff for the effort. Indeed, his own engagement in argument and criticism seems hamstrung by his skeptical and pessimistic assumptions about what can be achieved. Levinson turns away from hard problems of political morality not so much because they are hard, but because he cannot foresee the achievement of consensus on such problems.

SOME WOULD argue, no doubt, that the refusal to take your own side in an argument is exquisitely and essentially liberal. Unlike Levinson, however, liberals do not typically rest their convictions on faith. They seek to discern widely accessible reasons and arguments that can form a public morality. Levinson's skepticism provides little support for liberalism, or indeed, for any other political stance.

That is not to say that liberals should abandon their tolerant and self-critical posture. But tolerance must have its limits and standards, and these must be publicly defended and justified in particular cases. By embracing politics as conversation, Levinson usefully highlights liberalism's commitment to a continuing project of self-criticism, a permanent openness to dissent. But the happy image of the conversation should not obscure the fact that particular political decisions issue in rules and orders backed by the coercive powers of the modern state. We have to justify political decisions to those who believe their rights have been violated, and that requires serious argument. "Conversation" will not answer our practical political need.

Once we start to flesh out what is involved in liberal constitutionalism as a commitment to a reasonable self-government—a commitment many (myself included) share with Levinson—we will discern a set of substantial and by no means all-embracing ideals of liberal citizenship and community. Liberalism is not compatible with all ideals of life or with all conceptions of human nature and needs. And if we suppose that liberal constitutionalism may be justifiable, and that it remains the best interpretation of what it means to be an American, we need to articulate arguments good enough to answer liberalism's various critics. Above all, we should avoid laboring, as Levinson does, under the unwarranted assumption that it is never really worth pressing an argument to its conclusion. That is a self-inflicted wound.

STEPHEN MACEDO

Stephen Macedo teaches government at Harvard University. His book *Liberal Virtues* will be published by Oxford University Press.

GALLEY-SLAVES

A Far Cry From Kensington by Muriel Spark

(Houghton Mifflin, 189 pp., $17.95)

Almost every Muriel Spark novel hinges on a mystery. Often it begins with an anonymous letter or phone call, such as *Memento Mori*'s "Remember you must die," a disembodied message tinged with the otherworldly; or it begins with some suggestion of impropriety or betrayal (*The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie, Loitering With Intent*). At which point the whodunit begins. The body, if one materializes, comes later, often as a consequence of the hysteria created by the overblown investigation of a lesser crime. Her heroines, frequently "girls of slender means" (to borrow the title of another Spark novel), confine their prurient probes to the circumscribed places where they live and work—magazines, literary societies, publishing houses. They suspect the motives of everyone around them, particularly their employers, whose malevolence contaminates even their closest friends. Reality balloons into full-fledged satire. The rest is revenge fantasy.

But for Spark, ultimately, the enemy is within, both within the small sphere into which her characters seem randomly thrust and within the psyche. The Spark heroine's play at detection leads her to her own door: in order to triumph over her circumstances, she must bring herself in for questioning; she must change her own life.

Nancy Hawkins of *A Far Cry From Kensington*, writing in the first person of "that hungry period" in her life when she carried "great weight," is no exception. A 28-year-old war widow of "large presence," for whom mere standing is interpreted as taking a stand, she lives in a shabby rooming house in the squalor of London's South Kensington (circa 1954). She works at the near-bankrupt Ullswater and York Press as editor in chief: "general do-all, proofreader, literary adviser, and secretarial stand-in when the respective secretaries of Mr. York and Mr. Ullswater left to get married and were never replaced." Touted for her "reliability" and referred to solely as Mrs. Hawkins, she tirelessly edits quality books that for lack of funds never go to the printer, and is dogged all the while by hack writers such as Hector Bartlett. When she finally tells Bartlett, protégé of the prominent novelist Emma Loy, that he's a *pisseur de copie* (an epithet used by one of the French symbolist writers of

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the late 19th century to denote a urinator of awful prose), she promptly loses her job. But she doesn't lose Bartlett, who seems to follow her to each successive new job.

NO SOONER has she begun work at the publishing firm of Mackintosh and Tooley than his latest book, *The Eternal Quest: A Study of the Romantic-Humanist Position*, falls in her lap. Dubbed aptly by some *Quest for Eternity*, it purports to compare *The Pilgrim's Progress*, *Wilhelm Meister*, and *Peer Gynt*. The scene that ensues is all too familiar to assistant editors everywhere:

> "Mrs. Hawkins, we know that you are a remarkably reliable woman and so we have decided, after long reflection, to entrust you with a work of criticism . . . which needs a great deal of that application, that scrupulous attention and editing which we believe only you can give."
>
> I had a sense he was offering things abominable to me, like decaffeinated coffee or *coitus interruptus*; and by no means, at that moment, did I want to be a remarkably reliable woman.
>
> "The manuscript," he said, "needs putting into shape."
>
> "Do you mean rewriting?" I said.
>
> "Well, of course, that, too. But there are facts to be verified and so on. Grammar and syntax and so forth. Dates."

A week later Hawkins returns the manuscript to her boss unedited with a note that states, "I consider that it cannot be improved upon," and promptly loses her second job, as well as a third she's only just been offered.

Meanwhile, one of her neighbors in the rooming house, Wanda Podolak, "the Polish dressmaker whose capacity for suffering verged on rapacity," receives an anonymous letter, followed by an anonymous phone call, charging that she has failed to declare her income to the authorities and warning that she is being watched. Mrs. Hawkins immediately assumes the role of detective, and as the case deepens and expands in her own mind to implicate all those who hold sway over Hawkins herself, Wanda jumps into the Regent's Canal. At the heart of the scam, Hawkins surmises, is none other than Hector Bartlett, in league with Hawkins's second employer, Ian Tooley. Tooley, a "vegetarian, graphologist, and astrologist" who bases his literary decisions on the waxing and waning of the moon, is a disciple and promoter of "radionics," a form of voodoo in which a piece of someone's hair or a sample of their blood is put through an electronic box and their health is improved . . . or, as Mrs. Hawkins worries, destroyed (for "if the Box could do good it could also do evil"). Hawkins convinces herself that Wanda has been blackmailed by Bartlett to work the Box against her, having surreptitiously obtained a clipping of Hawkins's hair while measuring her for alterations.

THOSE OF US who spend our days in cramped offices pouring over galley proofs can well understand the seeds of such insanity. For us, indeed, Spark has written *the* book: *A Far Cry From Kensington* is to junior editors what *Bright Lights, Big City* was to fact checkers.

But unlike McInerney, Spark's barbs at the expense of those who wield power in the literary world are not without self-knowledge. They are, on the contrary, a glance in the mirror. And Spark's brilliant and repeated use of the double entendre highlights the dual import of her character's lives, marked by delusions both of grandeur and of persecution. Hawkins's "great weight," for example, both a physical and an intellectual attribute, is inversely proportional to the "fullness" of her life, personally and professionally. And in Spark's world the physical and the emotional go hand in hand.

After Mrs. Hawkins has been at Mackintosh and Tooley for "some time," she notices that everyone in a position of real responsibility is in some way "handicapped and vulnerable":

> My fellow editor was a sweet-natured, though vague, young woman, a vicar's daughter, her face frightfully marred all one side by a port-wine birth-mark. The head of the production department, totally incompetent but very witty, had a duodenal ulcer which he bore bravely, and limped from a war-wound. Ian Tooley's fellow-director and next-in-command . . . was the daughter of a notorious mass-murderer of the early '30s; her father had been hanged. . . . There was also, attached to the firm and often in evidence, a very small, raddled, and parchment-faced photographer who called himself Vladimir, a White Russian, who was said to beat his mother. . . . I think if there had existed a known descendant of Jack the Ripper they would have taken him on. It was their way of doing business as surely as crippledom, in the Far East, is still a profession and a way of life.

"Reflecting" on this cast of characters one night, Hawkins is "suddenly moved to switch on the light, get out of bed, and look at [herself] in the long glass on the inside of [her] clothes cupboard." All at once she realizes that she, by virtue of her impressive girth (which, in true Sparkian fashion, has expanded to hyperbolic proportions), is one of them. Henceforth, Hawkins vows, she will "eat and drink half," telling those who question her new regimen that she's "had enough." And though her diet plan is unerringly sensible, she vows never again to be deemed a "remarkably reliable woman." It is left only for William Todd, medical student and boy next door, to effect Hawkins's physical therapy (her sex life up to now has been nonexistent) and hence reinstate her long-lost first name.

HAWKINS SERVES up her delectable and highly digestible narrative to the reader as furtive gossip and privileged advice—the kind a disgruntled employee might share over a clandestine lunch. In this way, we are subtly led to doubt the narrator's reliability. (The reader looking to swallow truths should "eat and drink half" of Hawkins's anxious tale.) But that in no way detracts from the entertainment of the book. Indeed, Spark shows just how entertaining paranoia can be, how in fact it is a powerful source of fiction in its own right. When she adds the passing of time to paranoia, the effect is doubly heightened. The distance of years, the layers of distortion, the encrustation of myths only enhance the flavor of the story.

For Spark packages this already hallucinatory remembrance as the nighttime musings of a sleepless woman, "picking out of the past the scraps I had overlooked, those rejected events which now came to the foreground, large and important, so that the weight of destiny no longer bore on the current problems of my life." But as Hawkins let slip at the outset, these "thoughts of the night" are actually "past thoughts of the night." Her memories are memories of memories, twice or thrice removed. The world in which we really live, Spark reveals, is a "far cry" from what we see in our mind's often insomniac eye.

JENNIFER KRAUSS

Jennifer Krauss is an assistant editor at the *New York Review of Books*.

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

The Power Beyond

MAYBE I'M EXTRAPOLATING too much from small bits of evidence that have passed in front of me. But I'm convinced there's been a quiet Christian reawakening in this country entirely apart from anything that obstreperous televangelists may have stirred. As best I can tell, it's an upper-middle-class, mostly yuppie phenomenon. I've got three pieces of evidence. First, there's George Bush, a serious Episcopalian who actually goes to church regularly. (Ronald Reagan, while professing to be a Christian, rarely does.) The interesting thing about Bush is that he considers himself something of a born-again Christian. This is a big step because Episcopalians usually care more about liturgy than theology. Second, there's the experience of my daughter, who's a first-year student at the University of Virginia. Shortly after she arrived, she was recruited by student activists. They weren't from SDS or Young Americans for Freedom but from Christian groups. My daughter, along with hundreds of others, signed up. The contrast with my own experience 25 years ago is striking. Believe me, Christian groups were inconspicuous at UVA then. Third, there's the arrival of a new book called *The Power Beyond*. It's about faith healing, not one of your favorite subjects among the upper-middle-class elite. The book is written by a highly skeptical newspaper reporter from Erie, Pennsylvania, Jack Grazier, who recounts his own, reluctant encounter with faith healers and also tells the stories of others who say they were miraculously cured. What's interesting is that the book is being published next summer (I read the manuscript) by a secular publisher, Macmillan, for a popular audience, not just the Christian crowd. If this book catches on, I'll rest my case that an almost invisible revival is going on.

A PERSISTENT CANARD about Washington is that low pay deters people from taking top government jobs. The idea is that these folks won't serve as bosses of federal agencies or as White House aides for $80,000 to $90,000 a year because they can make so much more in the private sector. Well, they *can* earn a lot more on the outside. Still, there are always plenty of able people willing to swallow huge pay cuts for the power and fame that a big or even a small administration job offers. The Bush transition is proving this once again. Practically everybody in the Reagan administration wants to stay on in the Bush regime, though I'll bet most of them could dramatically increase their pay in the marketplace. Many will be shoved out to make way for Bushies eager for jobs at lower pay. Look who's already joined the Bush team. John Sununu has eight kids and has talked about making real money after years as a professor and politician. Yet he fought aggressively to be White House chief of staff, and won. Richard Darman must make several times $100,000 a year at Shearson Lehman Hutton, but he had no qualms about giving that up to be budget director. Bush campaign manager Lee Atwater could make $500,000 a year easily as a political consultant, but he jumped at the chance to be Republican national chairman (and senior presidential political adviser) at less than one-fifth the pay. John Tower would love to give up his fat retainers as a Washington consultant for defense contractors and become defense secretary. The list goes on and on.

ONE OF MY pet peeves is books about writers: there are too many of them. I think there's a conceit here. Books about writers make other writers feel important. But was Truman Capote really so significant a literary figure that a biography was required? I don't think so. I liked *In Cold Blood*, but it didn't make him a major writer. The *New York Times Book Review* disagrees, however, and included the Capote bio as one of the "notable books of the year." Worse, the *Times* puts a biography of the wife of James Joyce among the notables. Come on. Also making the list was a book by novelist Rumer Godden on the first 40 years of her life. More volumes of her unnecessary autobiography are to come, I'm sure. Worst of all are the books of some writer's letters. If the letters are as dazzling as George Bernard Shaw's, fine. But was a book of letters by poet Edward Lear required? I grieved for the trees chopped down to produce the paper for that one. What's needed from the publishing world is a mix of books that are a truer reflection of who is important in the scheme of things. Some writers are, but not many. Businessmen and entrepreneurs, scientists, and local politicians get short shrift. I think there ought to be more books about them. Of course, I'm not promising to read any of them.

THE BIGGEST GRIPE about the presidential campaign this year is that it was negative and issueless. Sorry, but it can't have been both. By their very nature negative campaigns are issue-oriented. The candidate who goes negative—in this case, both candidates—invariably attacks his opponent on his record or his stand on some issue. True, Bush was criticized at the Democratic convention as an upper-class twit. But most of the criticism was about his role in Iranamok, his dealings with Noriega, his position on taxes, etc. In other words, he was zinged on issues. Bush did the same to Michael Dukakis. He picked out five issues—Pledge of Allegiance, furlough program, ACLU, death penalty, national defense—on which to pound the Duke as a Massachusetts liberal. It worked. Now, it's fair to point out, as many Democrats have, that the Pledge and furloughs and the death penalty aren't issues that the next president is going to lose sleep over. They're mostly state issues. But they are issues. Granted, Bush skipped lightly over some big issues, especially the Nicaraguan *contras* and Star Wars, but he did run an issue-oriented campaign. If he hadn't, he'd have lost. For Bush, the biggest decision of the campaign was made over Memorial Day weekend when he and his strategists gathered at his pad in Kennebunkport, Maine. His advisers wanted him to go negative on the five issues and not let Dukakis present himself as a moderate. It didn't take much arguing to convince Bush.

FRED BARNES

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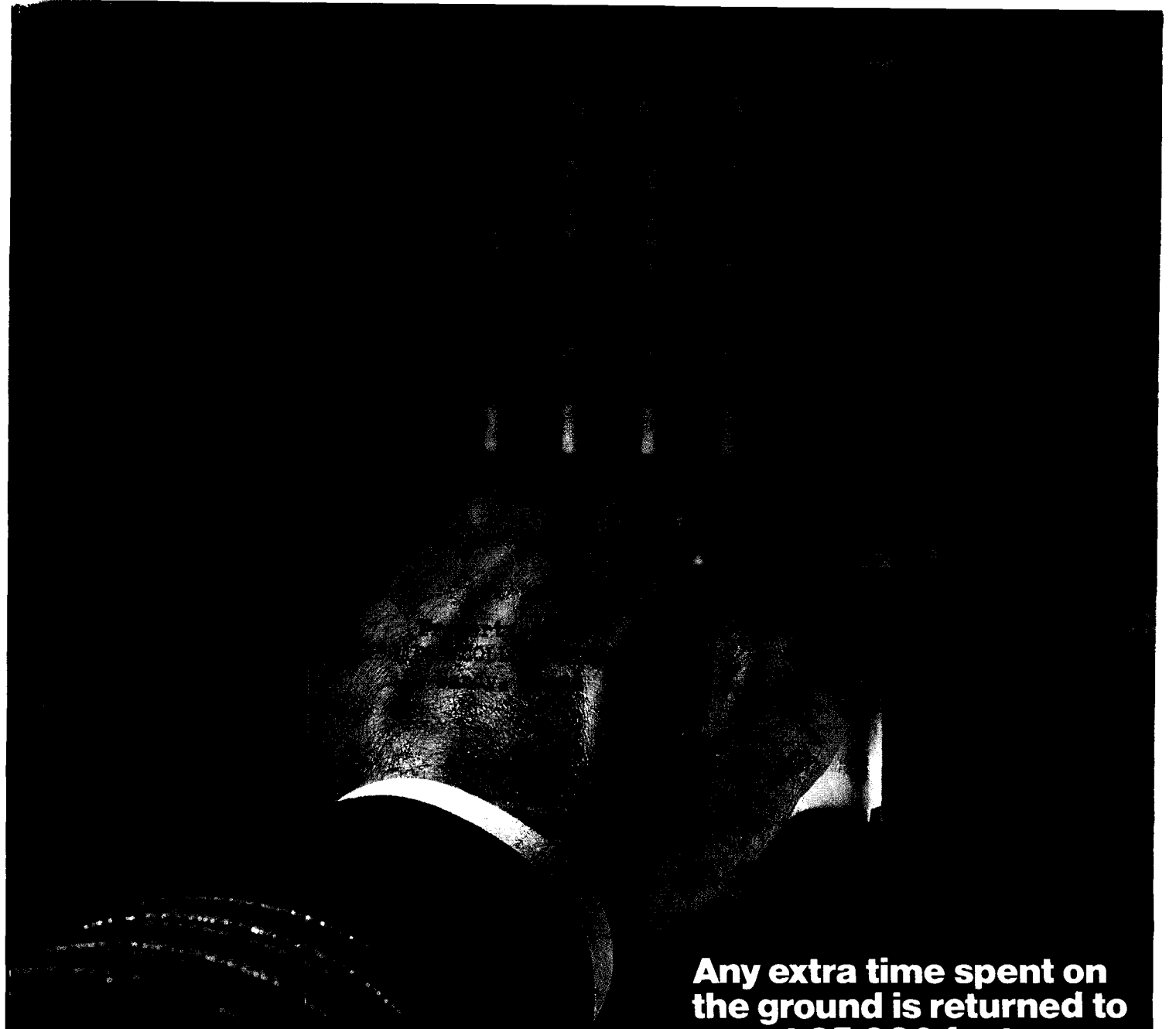

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